First Look: ***Smitten Kitchen's*** **New Cookbook**

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HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE

65 Recipes & Ideas for **Holiday Baking**

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Exclusive Visit to **Strasbourg's Famous Holiday Market**

Holiday Baking **Make-Ahead Tips**

RASPBERRY-APRICOT LINZERS
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SKILLET PRETZEL BREAD WITH CHEESE DIP

Combining perfectly chewy pretzel bread with a decadent pimiento cheese dip, this one-skillet wonder gets its superior height from Platinum® Yeast from Red Star®.

Makes 16 rolls

2 to 2¼ cups (250 to 281 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
1 tablespoon (14 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) Platinum Yeast
1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) kosher salt
1 teaspoon (1.5 grams) onion powder
½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
8¼ cups (1,980 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
1 tablespoon (14 grams) unsalted butter
1½ teaspoons (1.5 grams) chopped fresh sage
¼ cup (60 grams) baking soda
1 large egg yolk (19 grams)
2 teaspoons (6 grams) smoked flaked sea salt (optional)
Cheese Dip (recipe follows)
Garnish: sliced green onion

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine 1 cup (125 grams) flour, brown sugar, yeast, kosher salt, and onion powder.
2. In a small saucepan, heat milk, ¼ cup (60 grams) water, and butter over medium heat until an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture, and beat at medium speed until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1 cup (125 grams) flour and sage, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 5 to 6 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a smooth round.
4. Lightly oil a medium bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. On a very lightly floured surface, divide dough into 16 portions (about 30 grams each). Roll each portion into a ball, pinching seams closed. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) for 20 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Spray a 12-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray.
7. In a 4-quart stockpot, bring 8 cups (1,920 grams) water and baking soda to a gentle boil.
8. Carefully drop pretzels, 2 at a time, top side down, into boiling water mixture. Cook for 30 seconds; turn, and cook for 30 seconds. Using a spider strainer, lift, and let excess water drip off; arrange boiled dough on outer edge of prepared skillet. (They will be very close.)
9. In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolk and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Brush dough with egg wash. Using a lame or a small sharp knife, score an "X" on top of each pretzel. Sprinkle with sea salt (if using). Spread Cheese Dip in center of skillet.
10. Bake until bread is deep golden brown and cheese is bubbly, 16 to 18 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes. Garnish with green onion, if desired. Serve warm.

Cheese Dip

Makes about 5 cups

8 ounces (226 grams) cream cheese, room temperature
½ cup (112 grams) mayonnaise
1 tablespoon (15 grams) Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon (2 grams) dry mustard
½ teaspoon (1 gram) paprika
½ teaspoon onion powder
3 cups (339 grams) shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
3 cups (339 grams) shredded smoked Gouda cheese
1 (4-ounce) jar (113 grams) diced pimientos, drained and patted dry
⅓ cup (30 grams) chopped green onion
½ teaspoon chopped fresh sage

1. In a large bowl, whisk together cream cheese, mayonnaise, Worcestershire, dry mustard, paprika, and onion powder until smooth. Stir in Cheddar, Gouda, pimientos, green onion, and sage until well combined. Cover and set aside until ready to use. (This is best used at room temperature when baking. If making ahead of time, let come to room temperature before using.)

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TEST KITCHEN

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PRESENTING: A MOST BEAUTIFUL HOLIDAY IN FRANCE

France has always felt like my home away from home, and last year, I had the pleasure of making it my home for one blissful December. This issue is a love letter to that magical, magnificent time.

Like a sweet travelogue, each story captures an element of my trip. I went to my friend Jane Bertch's La Cuisine Paris for two of our Holiday Baking Retreats (La Cuisine Paris: A French Souvenir, page 91), an experience I always cherish. I was whisked away to the enchanting Christmas market in Strasbourg (Strasbourg: Capitale de Noël, page 69), where the merriment stretches from stall to stall. I baked with Jamie Schler at her hotel in Chinon (Chinon Charm, page 57), experiencing all the charms the Loire Valley had to offer. And I even got the chance to survey the season's Yule logs from the fine pastry chefs of Paris (Beautiful Bûches of Paris, page 99). Along the way, I took sweet inspiration from the things I ate, like the enchanting *marrons glacés* (candied chestnuts) on display in Paris and the warm mulled wine I had in Strasbourg. I was even able to teach a French baking class with Dorie Greenspan for our Baking School with Williams Sonoma, and that fun day in Paris led to an invitation for dinner at Dorie's apartment. How could I not say yes! But the true joy was getting to share the holidays in Paris with my husband, Stephen, and some of my dearest friends in the world. And now, I get to share it all with you, my fellow bakers!

You can still count on us providing all the traditional holiday feels (take our Raspberry-Apricot Linzer Cookies cover star) and tasty recipes for celebratory icons, like our Essential . . . Croquembouche. I'm particularly excited to offer you a look at Deb Perelman's brand-new cookbook, *Smitten Kitchen Keepers*, an instant classic that you'll turn to for generations.

Without further ado, join me on my holiday in France. It'll be a trip to remember.

Happy baking,

Brian

Brian Hart Hoffman
Editor-in-Chief

BROWN SUGAR PARIS-BREST

A magnified and magnificent take on the French classic, this Paris-Brest has a delicate molasses flavor in both the choux ring and the diplomat cream thanks to C&H® Light Brown Sugar.

Makes 1 (11-inch) Paris-Brest

- **⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter, cubed**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) water**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) whole milk**
- **1½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) firmly packed C&H® Light Brown Sugar**
- **¼ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **⅔ cup (83 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature and divided**
- **¼ cup (20 grams) sliced almonds**
- **Brown Sugar Diplomat Cream (recipe follows)**
- **1 (6-ounce) container (170 grams) fresh raspberries**
- **Garnish: confectioners' sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Using a permanent marker and an 8-inch round cake pan as a guide, draw a circle on a sheet of parchment paper. Turn parchment over, and place on a baking sheet.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring butter, ⅓ cup (80 grams) water, milk, brown sugar, and salt to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir in flour. Cook, stirring constantly, until a skin forms on bottom of pan and mixture pulls from sides of pan and forms a ball, about 1 minute. Transfer mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat at low speed until dough cools slightly, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add 3 eggs (150 grams), one at a time, beating until combined after each addition. (Batter will be shiny and slowly move back together when a spatula is dragged through it.)
3. Transfer batter to a large pastry bag fitted with a ¾-inch round piping tip (Ateco #809). Holding piping tip at a 45-degree angle, pipe a circle of choux along inside of drawn circle; pipe a circle along outside of drawn circle, right next to first piped circle, pushing choux into other circle to connect them fully. Pipe a third circle, on top of the first two, in center. Smooth with an offset spatula. Wet your finger with water, and press down any tips to create a smooth top, if necessary.
4. In a small bowl, light whisk remaining 1 egg (50 grams). Carefully brush choux with egg wash, making sure not to have a ton of excess fall onto parchment. Top with almonds.
5. Bake for 15 minutes. Rotate pan, and reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C). Bake until fully puffed and deep golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes more. Let cool completely on pan.
6. Using a serrated knife, cut cooled pastry in half horizontally. Set top aside.
7. Place Brown Sugar Diplomat Cream in a large pastry bag fitted with a ¾-inch French star piping tip (Ateco #829). Pipe cream onto bottom half of pastry as desired. Lightly press raspberries into cream. Place top half of pastry on top of piped cream and raspberries. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to help set filling. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired. Best served same day.

Brown Sugar Diplomat Cream

Makes 4 cups

- **2½ cups (600 grams) whole milk, divided**
- **⅔ cup (146 grams) firmly packed C&H® Light Brown Sugar, divided**
- **1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped and reserved**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **6 large egg yolks (114 grams), room temperature**
- **6 tablespoons (48 grams) cornstarch**
- **2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, cubed**
- **½ cup (120 grams) cold heavy whipping cream**

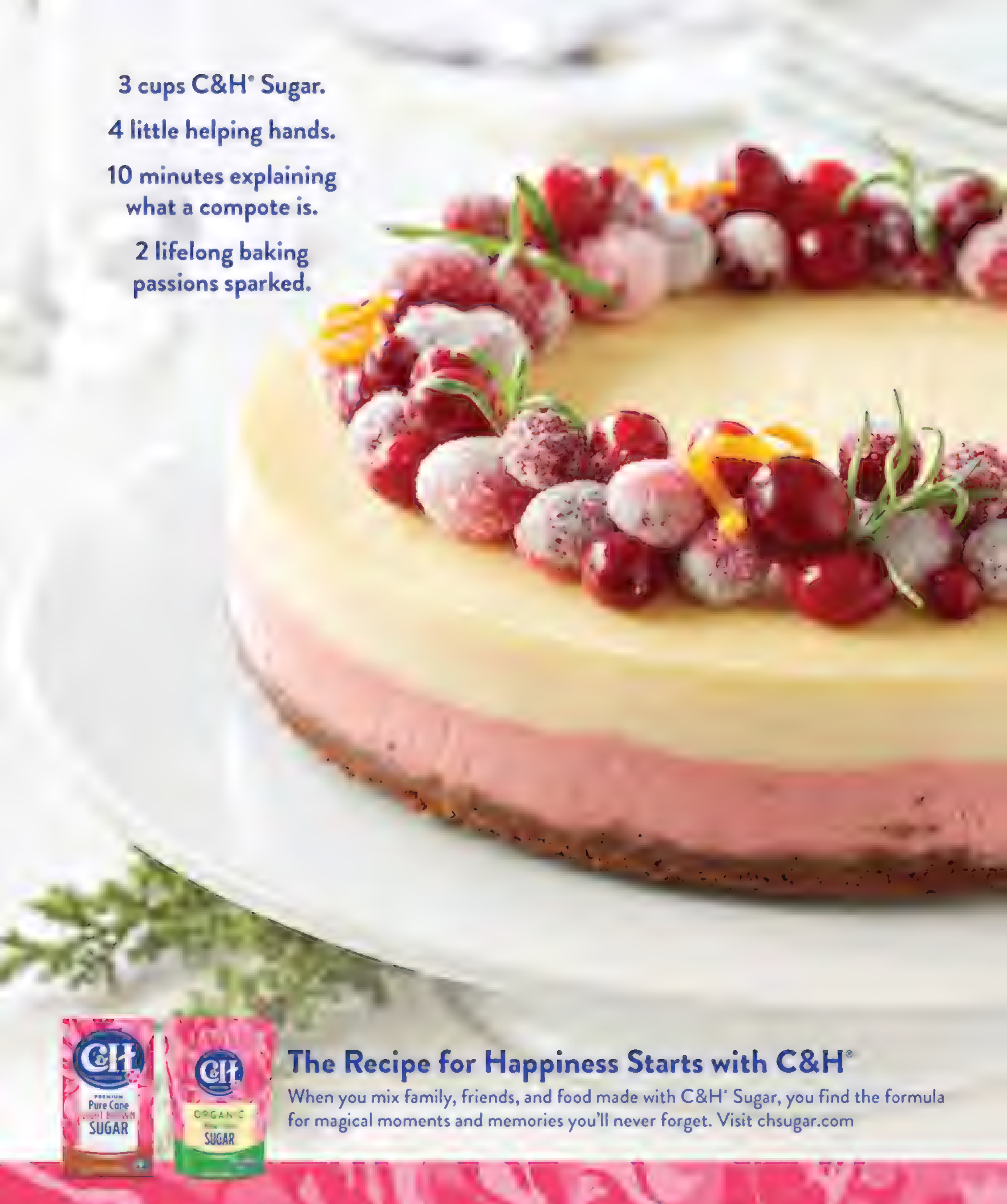
1. In a medium saucepan, heat 2 cups (480 grams) milk, ⅓ cup (73 grams) brown sugar, vanilla bean and reserved seeds, and salt over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until steaming. (Do not boil.) Discard vanilla bean.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, cornstarch, remaining ½ cup (120 grams) milk, and remaining ⅓ cup (73 grams) brown sugar. Pour hot milk mixture into egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Return mixture to saucepan, and bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until cornstarch flavor has cooked out, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium heatproof bowl. Stir in butter until completely combined. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until completely cooled, 1 to 2 hours.
3. In a large chilled bowl, using a chilled balloon whisk, whisk cold cream until stiff peaks form.
4. Whisk custard until smooth. Fold in whipped cream in two additions just until combined. Use immediately.

3 cups C&H® Sugar.

4 little helping hands.

10 minutes explaining what a compote is.

2 lifelong baking passions sparked.



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RESOURCES

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Baker Profile
Page 30: Photo of Deb Perelman courtesy of Christine Han

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A HOLIDAY BAKING GIFT GUIDE

MAKE THIS YEAR'S HOLIDAY BAKING SEASON ESPECIALLY MERRY AND BRIGHT WITH THIS COLLECTION OF BAKEWARE AND CAN'T-MISS COOKBOOKS

HOLIDAY COOKIES WITH THE KIDS

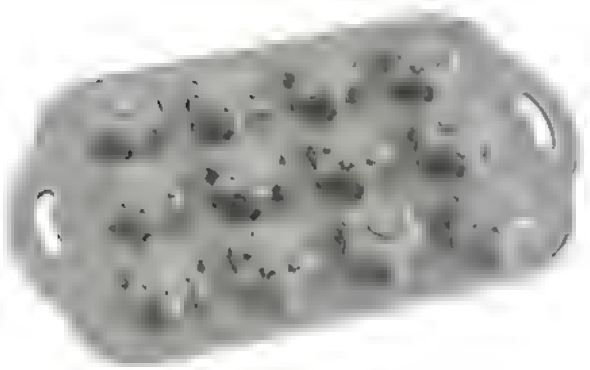
Baking batches of holiday cookies is certainly a group effort, and the Williams Sonoma Kids Bake and Create Cookie Set is the perfect starter pack for young ones looking to join in on the fun. From cookie cutters to pastry bags and piping tips, this set will inspire all the mini pastry chefs in the making. The high-quality tools are great for countless cooking and baking projects.

Available at *williams-sonoma.com*, $99.95

TINS TO SHARE

Half the fun of holiday baking is sharing your sweet creations with the ones you love. The Hawthorn Berries Set of 3 Round Cake Tins from The Bee's Knees British Imports acts as the ultimate container set for storage and transport while also adding a festive flair. The tins measure 10, 9, and 8 inches in diameter and even nestle together for easy storage. Lined with decorative paper and filled with holiday treats, these tins are sure to be a holiday season highlight.

Available at *thebeeskneesbritishimports.com*, $68



LET IT SNOW

Glistening and swirling, this Frosty Flakes Bites Pan by Nordic Ware will make cakelets your new favorite winter treat. Garnished with a dusting of confectioners' sugar or a snow-white glaze, the cakes you make in this pan will be as beautiful as the freshly fallen snow outside. Featuring a sparkling silver finish, this pan will be the perfect addition to your holiday baking lineup.

Available at *nordicware.com*, $43

A HANDY HELPER

Bring your baking ingredients to room temperature with this beautifully designed Baker's Helper from Uncommon Goods. The set contains a wood board with six egg holders that'll keep eggs from rolling off the counter, two rectangular divots for sticks of butter, a ceramic cup for storing liquid ingredients after they've been taken out of the fridge, and a handblown glass dome to keep it all contained and covered. For cookies, cakes, and more, room temperature ingredients not only incorporate easier but add amazing texture, too.

Available at *uncommongoods.com*, $68

MEASURING SPOONS THAT SHINE

If baking is an art form, then these Copper and Gold Measuring Spoons from Vesper and Vine are a baker's metaphorical brush. Crafted by master artisans in India, each spoon is made with high-quality copper and gold. Sustainably made for a lifetime of baking, these spoons are so beautiful that it'll be difficult to hide them in a kitchen drawer.

Available at *vesperandvine.com*, $40

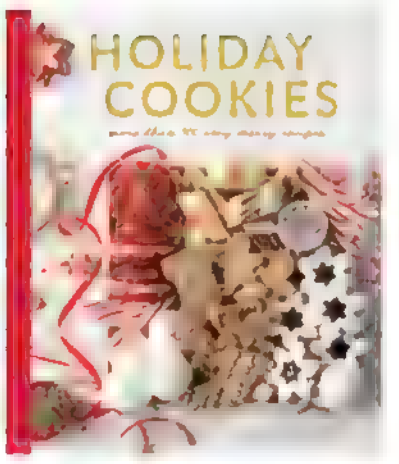
KEEP IT COOL

Sturdy, space-saving, and finished with gorgeous copper plating, the Stackable Cooling Grids from Nordic Ware are as efficient as they are visually pleasing. The two grids can be used separately, but stacked together with four snap-in stacking legs, they can provide ample space for all of your bakes to cool while taking up less of your counter. They're not only a space-saving solution but also a gorgeous addition to your everyday bakeware.

Available at *nordicware.com*, $33

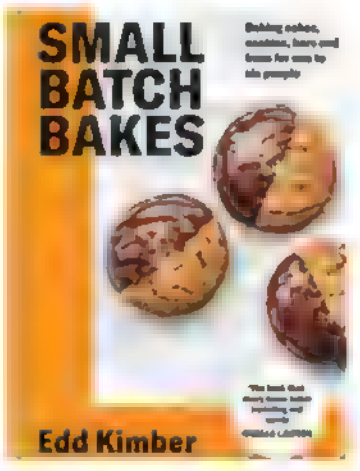
COOKBOOKS

HOLIDAY COOKIE CRAVINGS



With cookie exchanges and holiday gatherings galore just around the corner, there's no book that'll have you better prepared than Brian Hart Hoffman's *Holiday Cookies* (83 Press, 2022). Full of tried-and-tested recipes ranging from the classic thumbprint to festive twists perfect, this book will have you celebrating the season in no time.

Available now, $34.95



SMALL-BATCH SWEETS

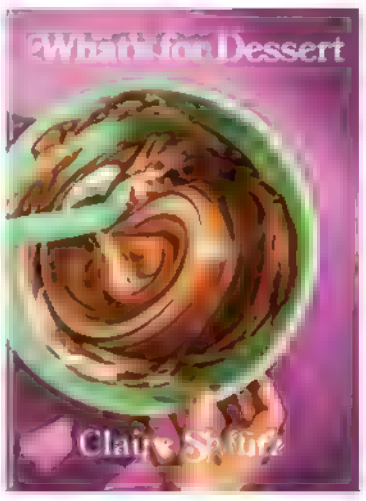
Edd Kimber's *Small Batch Bakes: Baking cakes, cookies, bars and buns for one to six people* (Kyle Books, 2022) is the perfect cookbook for all your small-batch baking needs. Each serving up to six people, the majority of the recipes are sweet, but there are also some savory bakes perfect for lunches or light dinners. For the holidays, the Snickerdoodle Cheesecake Bars are a can't-miss.

Available now, $22.99

MEXICAN AMERICAN-MADE

A companion cookbook to Esteban Castillo's *Chicano Eats* (Harper Design, 2020), *Chicano Bakes: Recipes for Mexican Pan Dulce, Tamales, and My Favorite Desserts* (Harper Design, 2022) explores the sweeter side of Chicano cuisine. Connecting with his roots and the culinary traditions of his childhood, Esteban's newest cookbook features 80 recipes, ranging from *pasteles* (cakes) to *pan dulces* (sweet breads). The Red Velvet Chocoflan is a holiday must-bake, complete with delicious layers of rich flan and tender red velvet cake.

Available November 1, $39.99



FOR THE DESSERT PERSON

In her newest book, *What's for Dessert: Simple Recipes for Dessert People* (Clarkson Potter, 2022), Claire Saffitz returns with 100 recipes designed for dessert people. From brownies to cakes to cookies and more, each recipe in this collection is designed to be as simple and streamlined as possible. Her S'mores Tart is a surefire showstopper, and it'll be impossible to eat just one of the Caramel Peanut Popcorn Bars.

Available November 8, $37.50

GET THE KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Jennifer Latham's *Baking Bread with Kids: Trusty Recipes for Magical Homemade Bread* (Ten Speed Press, 2022) makes bread-baking fun and accessible for the whole family. Teaching kids to master the art of mixing, folding, proofing, and baking to create incredible breads, this book includes all the classics, from sandwich breads to fluffy, buttery Brioche Rolls that would be an extra-special addition to this year's holiday gatherings.

Available November 15, $22

VANILLA-CHOCOLATE PINWHEEL COOKIES

This two-toned cookie offers the best of both worlds, pairing an aromatic vanilla dough with a rich cocoa dough. The secret behind this sweetly swirling treat? Rodelle Pure Vanilla Extract and Rodelle Dutch Process Gourmet Baking Cocoa, two ingredients that help amp up the level of decadence, just in time for the holidays.

Makes about 44 cookies

- **1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened and divided**
- **1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, divided**
- **2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature and divided**
- **3 teaspoons (12 grams) Rodelle Pure Vanilla Extract, divided**
- **2⅔ cups plus 2 tablespoons (349 grams) all-purpose flour, divided**
- **1½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) baking powder, divided**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt, divided**
- **½ cup (48 grams) Rodelle Dutch Process Gourmet Baking Cocoa**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat ½ cup (113 grams) butter and ½ cup (100 grams) sugar at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add 1 egg (50 grams) and 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) Rodelle Pure Vanilla Extract, beating until combined.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together 1⅔ cups flour (208 grams), ¾ teaspoon (3.75 grams) baking powder, and ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until a dough forms.

3. Turn out dough onto a large piece of parchment paper. (If any flour bits remain, knead dough by patting dough and folding it in half.) Shape dough into a 6x5-inch rectangle, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

4. Clean bowl of stand mixer and paddle attachment. Using the paddle attachment, beat remaining ½ cup (113 grams) butter and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar at medium speed until creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add remaining 1 egg (50 grams) and remaining 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) Rodelle Pure Vanilla Extract, beating until combined.

5. In another medium bowl, whisk together Rodelle Dutch Process Gourmet Baking Cocoa, remaining 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour (141 grams), remaining ¾ teaspoon (3.75 grams) baking powder, and remaining ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add cocoa mixture to butter mixture, beating until a dough forms.

6. Turn out dough onto a large piece of parchment paper. (If any flour bits remain, knead dough by patting dough and folding it in half.) Shape dough into a 6x5-inch rectangle, and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

7. Let doughs stand at room temperature for about 5 minutes. On a lightly floured sheet of parchment paper, roll plain dough into a 14x10-inch rectangle. Repeat procedure with chocolate dough. Transfer doughs on parchment to 2 baking sheets, and refrigerate until firm but still pliable, about 20 minutes.

8. Transfer plain dough on parchment to a flat surface. Carefully invert chocolate dough on top of plain dough. Between sheets of parchment, roll over doughs a few times to press together. Peel away top sheet of parchment. Starting with one long side, roll dough into a log, using bottom sheet of parchment to help lift and roll as tightly as possible to avoid gaps. Trim ½ inch off each end. Tightly wrap in plastic wrap, twisting ends to seal. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

9. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

10. Cut log into ¼-inch-thick slices. (See Note.) Round edges of dough slices as needed. Place 1 inch apart on prepared pans. (If dough log starts to get too soft, freeze for 15 minutes or refrigerate for 30 minutes until firm.)

11. Bake until edges and tops are set and bottoms are golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely on pans. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *Let dough chilled for longer time spans stand at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes, or until slightly softened and easier to slice.*

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BAKING BREAD FOR THOSE IN NEED

LED BY CONGREGANT PAULA WEINSTEIN, VOLUNTEERS FROM TEMPLE ISRAEL COLUMBUS OF COLUMBUS, OHIO, HAVE BEEN BAKING AND TAKING CHALLAH TO JORDAN'S CROSSING, A COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER, SINCE NOVEMBER 2019. HERE, WE TALK WITH PAULA ABOUT ALL THINGS CHALLAH, HOLIDAY BAKING, AND GIVING BACK TO THOSE IN NEED.

What is the significance of challah?
Paula Weinstein: The term "challah" is most widely used to mean any bread used in Jewish rituals but is typically eaten on Shabbat (the Jewish sabbath, which runs from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday) as well as many major Jewish holidays. The traditional shape of challah is braided to form 12 humps, meant to signify the 12 tribes of Israel.

What inspired you all to start baking for Jordan's Crossing?
PW: The Social Justice Team of Temple Israel Columbus chose Jordan's Crossing as a place where we could make an impact in the community. Social justice is one of the important *mitzvot* for us at Temple Israel Columbus. It was decided that we would make challah the first Friday of every month for 150 to 200 people who rely on Jordan's Crossing for their meals.

In Jewish tradition—and to those of us who volunteer—food is intertwined closely with faith. Meals bring people together, and I hope that the people at Jordan's Crossing feel like a family and community when they sit down together for dinner and eat our challah. It's enriching and warming to know it's so beneficial. I wish we could do it more than once a month!

What does a bread-baking day look like?
PW: Two volunteers go to the temple's kitchen at 6:30 a.m. and make all the dough and then allow it to proof twice. Then, 6 to 8 more volunteers arrive to weigh the dough and then braid the loaves. After rising again, the loaves are egg-washed. They rise again for 15 to 20 minutes, are egg-washed again, and then baked. After cooling, the breads are bagged to deliver to Jordan's Crossing.

Are you working off a special family recipe for the challah? Can you reveal any secrets about the recipe?
PW: One of our volunteers tweaked a few recipes she had to create her favorite, and we have been using that. Using a double egg wash is important; it helps to give the bread its distinctive glossy, golden color after it is baked.

Any special plans for this program during the holiday season?
PW: Some volunteers always make Christmas cookies that we take when we deliver the challah for Jordan's Crossing.

What has the impact on the community been?
PW: Every month when we deliver the challah, the volunteers and recipients at Jordan's Crossing always tell us how much they look forward to the first Fridays and how much they enjoy the bread.

The project is mentioned in weekly Temple Israel Columbus emails and the quarterly print bulletin. Some of our volunteers come when they can, others show up every month. Several new volunteers have joined the baking group since it began pre-pandemic. Since November 2019, we have doubled our baking volunteers.

To learn more about the Social Justice Team at Temple Israel Columbus and their efforts to support the greater Columbus community, head over to *templeisrael.org/social-justice*.

NEW!
SPECIAL ISSUE

ONE OF OUR FAVORITE *BAKE FROM SCRATCH* TRADITIONS IS AVAILABLE NOW!

Bakers, it's time to pull out the cookie cutters and piping tips—our 2022 *Holiday Cookies* special issue is here!

This issue includes a merry and bright star-studded lineup of bakers, in addition to our own holiday favorite classics, like Frosted Peppermint Brownie Cookies and Volador Cookies. More than 50 recipes and test kitchen tips and techniques to inspire you to preheat the oven and start baking.

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CHESTNUTS

A HISTORICAL AND FLAVORFUL LOOK AT THE HUMBLE CHESTNUT

BY KYLE GRACE MILLS

If there ever was a giving tree, the chestnut tree is it. Like the formidable oak tree, its tannin-rich wood provides durable, straight timber for carpenters building furniture, fences, and even ships. Those same tannins were used to hand-dye silks and leather. But where the chestnut proves most useful is in the kitchen. Encased in a prickly husk, the chestnut is one of the great jewels of the culinary world. Versatile and nutrient-rich, its mildly sweet meat has staved off famines and nourished generations of Europeans, Asians, Americans, and Arabs. In other words, wherever the chestnut has been cultivated, humanity has flourished. But why has this special tree nut endured as a sweet ingredient for bakers?

First, we need to discuss the unique qualities of its chemical makeup. Unlike other nuts that are high in fat, chestnut is made up of half carbohydrates and half water, with some good protein thrown in the mix. So contrary to its classification, the chestnut has more in common with a potato than with an almond or pecan. Starchy and earthy sweet, the chestnut can be treated in much the same way as a tuber. Eaten raw, it has a bitter, astringent taste and tough texture, but once boiled or roasted, the flavor mellows to a mild sweetness and the texture becomes soft enough for a purée or mash.

Roasting chestnuts has been an enduring method for preparing them for consumption. Of course, roasted chestnuts have been a long-standing street food, offered far and wide from October to December, when chestnuts are in season. In fact, you can find street vendors selling roasted chestnuts across five continents, from the bazaars of Istanbul, Turkey, to the neon jungle of Hong Kong, China. At home, the main key to roasting them is scoring the skins before popping them into the oven (to prevent mini chestnut explosions) and wrapping them in a kitchen towel immediately after roasting for a steamy cooldown (to help loosen the skins for easy peeling). Boiling can be a more finnicky method, as you'll need to remove the skins while the chestnuts are still submerged in warm water as peeling them once cooled is near impossible. Either way, once cooked and peeled, these chestnuts are best used within 24 hours.

However, the global popularity of the chestnut has led to an influx of convenient, premade chestnut products on the market. Whole roasted and peeled chestnuts can be bought online and at certain grocery stores. Normally packed in plastic pouches, these chestnuts save the home baker considerable time, as the at-home roasting method can be tedious and hot work. If your recipe calls for your roasted chestnuts to be puréed or mashed (as many of our recipes in this issue do), it's not necessary to be working with freshly roasted chestnuts. We used Gefen Organic Whole Roasted and Peeled Chestnuts, available at *amazon.com*. But that is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to chestnut products.

One of the most common ways that chestnuts are incorporated into baking is as *crème de marrons*, or chestnut cream or spread. As opposed to chestnut purée, which is unsweetened and contains no flavoring, crème de marrons often contains sugar and/or vanilla flavoring, making a spread that is more akin to Nutella than hazelnut butter. The most famous brand of crème de marrons is Clément Faugier Crème de Marrons de l'Ardèche (sold as Chestnut Spread in English and also available at *amazon.com*). Sold in tubes, packets, and cans, this brand has been a French staple for more than 100 years. Faugier revolutionized the chestnut

business in 1882, when he invented a new way to mass produce *marrons glacés*, candied chestnuts (pictured below). Speaking of marrons glacés, this is perhaps the most popular French chestnut product. Cooked in sugar and then further glazed in syrup, marrons glacés offer a true taste of Old-World French decadence.

Other tangential chestnut products are chestnut flour and chestnut honey. Chestnut flour is made from ground, dried chestnuts and is most used in Italy, where it forms the basis of the beloved *castagnaccio*, a Tuscan cake made of chestnut flour, water, and an assortment of pine nuts and raisins. Chestnut honey also has Italian roots but can be found in France and Spain as well. Intense in color and flavor, chestnut honey is made by bees distilling the nectar from chestnut blossoms. Described as smoky, spicy, and even "mysterious," no two chestnut honey brands are alike, capturing the complex terroir of a region much like wine does. Its robust flavor makes it a natural pairing to charcuterie boards, but a drizzle over a chestnut crêpe or cake isn't uncommon either.

What to do with all these diverse chestnut products? For our baking purposes, it's best to look at what the Western Europeans have done with the chestnut. In Piedmont, Italy, the creamy chestnut is the key ingredient to the famous Mont Blanc, a dessert visually modeled after the highest alpine mountain. Mixed with rum and sugar, the chestnut mash is fed through a ricer and swirled into a conical peak before being topped with whipped cream, creating a snow-capped vermicelli-like mountain. Our Chestnut Tortellini Dolci (page 55) also joins rum and chestnut in its creamy filling and is inspired by the classic Italian Christmas cookie. In the León region of Spain, puréed chestnut is often paired with chocolate, a natural complement to its earthy flavor, in cakes and tarts. Our Rosemary-Chestnut Cream Tart (page 56) takes advantage of this sophisticated flavor pairing, dotting our tart with Chestnut-Cocoa Whipped Cream. The French also love a good chestnut and chocolate combination, exemplified in Jamie Schler's Chocolate Chestnut Fondant (page 60).

Gâteau Ardéchois is another French delicacy that makes the most of chestnut's signature sweetness. Also known as chestnut cream cake, it's made with chestnut cream and adorned with a simple dusting of confectioners' sugar. Our Chestnut-Apple-Pecan Cake (page 55) flips the script on this, using a glistening crown of marrons glacés as the main chestnut flavor punch. Beyond that, many bakers will incorporate chestnut cream into their fillings or toppings. Take La Cuisine's Mini Bûche de Noël (page 97), which has a tight spiral of chestnut cream-lightened filling in the center. Again, it's the chestnut's versatility that makes it such a treasure in the kitchen.

This holiday season, consider incorporating chestnut into your baking, like our ancestors of old. Think of the simple pleasures a roasted chestnut can promise. Or, as Nikos Kazantzakis writes in *Zorba the Greek*, "How simple and frugal a thing is happiness; a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea."

BAKE WITH CHESTNUTS

In this issue, don't miss:

Chestnut Tortellini Dolci, page **55**

Chestnut-Apple-Pecan Cake, page **55**

Rosemary-Chestnut Cream Tart, page **56**

Chocolate Chestnut Fondant, page **60**

CANDIED CHESTNUTS

CHESTNUT SPREAD
SINCE 1885
ORGANIC
ROASTED
Chestnuts
RECIPE READY
Peeled
TREE RIPENED
CHÂTAIGNES GRILLEES
ET PELEES
FOR COOKING | BAKING | SNACK

ADVERTISING

CHOCOLATE, CHERRY, AND HAZELNUT BREAD

Loaded with rich chocolate, tart cherries, and earthy hazelnuts, this crispy loaf brings both hearty comfort and seasonal decadence to the holiday table. To achieve its signature crispy crust, we baked our boule in Le Creuset's new enamel-coated, cast-iron Bread Oven, a revolutionary tool for transforming ordinary loaves into artisan creations.

Makes 1 (10-inch/2¾ pound) loaf

- **2 cups (480 grams) hot water (160°F/71°C to 170°F/77°C)**
- **1 cup (113 grams) chopped hazelnuts**
- **½ cup (80 grams) chopped dried tart cherries**
- **3 cups (381 grams) bread flour**
- **1¼ cups (156 grams) whole wheat flour**
- **½ cup (43 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder**
- **3¾ teaspoons (11.25 grams) kosher salt**
- **1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast**
- **½ cup (85 grams) chopped 60% cacao bittersweet chocolate**
- **2 cups (480 grams) warm water (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)**
- **Semolina flour, for dusting**

1. In a small bowl, combine 1 cup (240 grams) hot water and hazelnuts. In another small bowl, combine cherries and remaining 1 cup (240 grams) hot water. Let stand for 30 minutes; using a fine-mesh sieve, drain hazelnuts and cherries.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together bread flour, whole wheat flour, cocoa, salt, sugar, and yeast by hand. Add drained hazelnuts, drained cherries, and chocolate. Add 2 cups (480 grams) warm water; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until a sticky dough forms, about 30 seconds.

3. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or preferably overnight.

4. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using floured hands, lightly press dough into a 1-inch-thick oval. Fold bottom third over to center. Fold right third over to center; repeat with left side. Finish by folding top third over previous folds. Roll loaf away from you until seam side down, and using both hands, cup dough and pull it toward you to seal. Rotate dough 90 degrees, and pull again until a tight, smooth boule forms. Place, seam side up, in a banneton (proofing basket) heavily dusted with bread flour (or a medium bowl lined with a kitchen towel dusted with bread flour). Loosely cover dough with towel, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 50 minutes to 1 hour.

5. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).

6. Generously dust top of dough in banneton with semolina flour, and invert dough, semolina side down, directly into Le Creuset Bread Oven. Score dough, if desired. Cover with lid, and place in oven.

7. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove lid, and bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of loaf registers 200°F (93°C), 30 to 35 minutes more. Immediately remove loaf from Bread Oven, and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing. Store in a bread box, bread bag, or well-sealed paper bag for up to 3 days.

LE CREUSET

BAKE LIKE THE EXPERTS AT HOME WITH THE **NEW**

Le Creuset Bread Oven

Image featuring Tartine Bakery.

MOLASSES-GINGER CRINKLE COOKIES WITH ORANGE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

A HUMBLE FAVORITE OF THE HOLIDAY COOKIE EXCHANGE, MOLASSES COOKIES ARE A SWEET TESTAMENT TO THE AGE-OLD ADAGE THAT THE SIMPLE THINGS IN LIFE ARE OFTEN THE BEST

Once upon a time, molasses cookies reigned supreme as the holiday cookie of choice. In fact, molasses itself was the sweetener of choice for many bakers. Molasses is a dark, sweet, syrupy byproduct of the sugar extraction process. Juice is extracted from sugarcane or sugar beets, usually by diffusion or milling, and then boiled until the water evaporates and only a syrup remains. This boiled-down syrup is then placed in a centrifuge, which separates the raw sugar crystals from the syrup, with the remaining syrup then being packaged and sold as molasses or added back in with the sugar after it's been refined to create brown sugar. Fermenting and then distilling sugarcane molasses also creates a spirited favorite: rum. There's also the distinction between sulphured and unsulphured molasses. Unsulphured molasses is extracted from mature sugarcane, whereas sulphured molasses is made from sugarcane that hasn't had time to fully mature, with sulfur dioxide added to preserve the young sugarcane until it's processed.

While molasses used to be the most popular sweetener in the United States, after World War I, refined white sugar replaced it as a cheaper alternative. Bakers traded molasses for white sugar that added sweetness without influencing the color and flavor of their bakes. However, there would always be the breads, cookies, cakes, and pies that relied upon molasses for a sweetness with some depth. Grandma's Molasses was one of the few molasses purveyors to stick around, from its start in 1890 to current day. Around the 1950s, Grandma's Molasses started adding recipes to their advertising campaigns and creating cookbooks like *Grandma's Recipes for Mother and Daughter*, which included recipes for soft and crisp molasses cookies. Over the years, the recipe hasn't changed much. Our remake of the classic includes a small splash of bourbon in the dough and an Orange Cream Cheese Frosting that adds just the right amount of bright, citrusy flavor.

MOLASSES-GINGER CRINKLE COOKIES WITH ORANGE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Makes 24 cookies

Inspired by the recipe for molasses crinkle cookies found on jars of Grandma's Molasses, these cookies are delightfully chewy, lightly crisp, and full of nuanced sweetness and warm winter spices. Finished with a swirl of sweet, slightly tangy Orange Cream Cheese Frosting, these cookies take a humble recipe to new heights.

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup (50 grams) all-vegetable shortening
- 1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- ¼ cup (85 grams) unsulphured molasses
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) bourbon
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground ginger
- 1½ teaspoons (3 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1¼ teaspoons (6.25 grams) baking soda
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- ½ cup (100 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (12 grams) turbinado sugar, divided
- Orange Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows)

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, shortening, and brown sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, beating well. Beat in molasses, bourbon, and vanilla.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Cover and refrigerate until firm, about 1½ hours.
3. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Roll half of dough into 1½-inch balls (38 grams each). (Keep remaining dough refrigerated.) Roll dough balls in ½ cup (100 grams) turbinado sugar, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Flatten dough balls into 2-inch disks. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
6. Bake until puffed and set, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans for 3 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Repeat procedure with remaining dough.
7. Using an offset spatula, spread Orange Cream Cheese Frosting on top of cookies, and sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon (12 grams) turbinado sugar.

Orange Cream Cheese Frosting

Makes about 3 cups

- 8 ounces (226 grams) cream cheese, room temperature
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) tightly packed orange zest
- 4 cups (480 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese, butter, and orange zest at high speed until smooth and creamy. Add confectioners' sugar and vanilla, and beat at low speed for 30 seconds. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat for 2 minutes. Use immediately.

BAKING FOR KEEPS

DEB PERELMAN DISCUSSES *SMITTEN KITCHEN KEEPERS: NEW CLASSICS FOR YOUR FOREVER FILES*, A COOKBOOK FULL OF HER PERFECTED AND PREFERRED RECIPES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEB PERELMAN

What's the main inspiration behind your new cookbook, *Smitten Kitchen Keepers*?

Deb Perelman: With this cookbook, I was thinking a lot about the energy that drove me to create [my blog] *Smitten Kitchen* in the first place, and I've been blogging forever. I started it in 2006, and a lot of it was just this idea of [wanting] forever recipes. I didn't want, like, a quicky, one-off recipe; I wanted the last blueberry muffins you'd ever make or the last pound cake you'd ever make. I think that's what we're all looking for; we're just looking for the one that's going to make us not have to think about selection next time we want to bake. What would be my ultimate chicken Parmesan? What would be my ultimate chocolate peanut butter cup cookie? Writing [the book] over an unprecedented pandemic probably had some effect on it, too, where we were just home so much and cooking around the clock. I really found myself thinking a lot more about which of these recipes are things my kids might want to make one day and which of these things are workhorses that are working for us week to week and which are just feeling too fussy. I felt like I was cutting a lot of extraneous steps and energy out of recipes, which is probably good for everyone.

Speaking of your blog, *Smitten Kitchen*, you were one of the pioneers of the food blogging world. Why do you think that has been an enduring channel for baking and food lovers?

DP: I never considered myself, at the time, a beginner, but now, I realize, relative to how long it's going on, I probably was in pretty early. If just not a couple years in, but I've always thought of blogging less as a style of publishing and more [as] just a way to self-publish. It just allowed people to get their ideas out and on the web without having to be published by somebody else, which I think is a very natural thing that writers want to do. When you look at what's happening in newsletters, in TikTok and Reels and Instagram, it's just different ways of people getting their story out there through food. The format changes, but what people are doing doesn't change that much. In the end, we're looking for recipes that work, recipes that are appealing to us, and we'd like to hear a little bit about them.

Are there a lot of recipes in the cookbook that come directly from your blog?

DP: My cookbooks are always about 85% to 90% new content, and it's 10% to 15% that's been previously published on my blog. As I'm filling in the pieces of the book, it's less about wanting to do less work of new recipe development and more about, like, it

would be insane not to put the chocolate peanut butter cookies in here, which are from my site; it's just a perfect fit. But then there are other things, like the thick molasses cookies. I've just not published this recipe because it took me that many years to get it right. I started working on it with my last book, and I never was happy with it. It just sometimes takes longer for me to get things where I want them to be. I've never done a chocolate chip cookie before in my books because I realized that there was something I really wanted from a chocolate chip cookie that I wasn't getting from it, and that's where I jumped off from here. And the recipe in *Keepers* is now my forever chocolate chip cookie. It has salted walnut brittle in it, which is—it's so good. It's got an extra crunch and nuance to the cookie that I think is so special.

If there were just one recipe you'd want bakers to make from your cookbook this holiday season, what would it be?
DP: I feel obligated to talk about the thick molasses spice cookies, which are an obsession of mine. I love molasses cookies that are a little tender and chewy, not too cakey, but have a nice softness to them. I feel like I tried basically every recipe on earth trying to find my perfect one. Then, I just gave up and started working from what I learned—you know, pulling the black pepper from this one and the texture from another and kind of putting it all together. I love these cookies. They are one bowl; you mix them by hand, and there's no resting period. And they just make your entire home smell like the holidays. I cannot wait to make them like 15 more times this season.

Are there any recipes particularly near and dear to your heart for sentimental reasons?
DP: I do love the Challah Cheesecake Buns. But I have a few disclaimers. This is not a cinnamon roll. They're not nearly as decadent or over the top. I think of them more like a Danish—you know, kind of a moderately sweet, like maybe slightly grown-up breakfast treat. Challah is a slightly sturdier dough than your average brioche, and they get a nice color on them. But I chose the cream cheese and jam because it's something I associate with my dad. I don't feel like cream cheese and jelly sandwiches are really a thing, but I remember having them when I grew up, and my dad would talk about having them growing up in the Bronx. I don't know if it's, like, just a Jewish thing or a corner deli thing; it was probably a little bit of both. But he was just nostalgic for them, and it basically just tastes like cheesecake when you put jam and cream cheese together with no added sugar, and so it makes such a delicious breakfast.

What were some of your sources of inspiration while writing this cookbook?
DP: When it comes to my actual inspiration for cooking, it tends to come outside of the kitchen. I don't usually stand in the kitchen and feel inspired. I stand in the kitchen, and I think, "My God, I really need to clean this wall." It tends to be out and about. Maybe I'll be leaf-peeping on the weekend, and it just kind of appears in my head. The ideas tend to land in my consciousness outside the kitchen while I probably am picking up inspiration everywhere I go and in everything I read. Sometimes my ideas were solutions to a problem that I had. Like, I wanted a chocolate birthday cake that was decadent and perfect but also very easy to make and didn't take too long to bake, and I wanted it to fit in the bottom of a shopping bag so I could just, like, bring it to friends for their birthday. There is this agenda for it to fit a very specific place. And then I hope for other people who have the same situation, where they have friends who want a really beautiful chocolate cake, but they don't want to, like, go crazy making it, this would work for them.

Above all else, what do you hope readers take away from your cookbook?
DP: It's funny. I've written a whole book of recipes, but if people can find even two keepers in here, I think we're doing really well. I think if you've got two forever recipes from one cookbook, doesn't it beat the odds? I have higher aspirations for this, but that's my realistic aspiration. And even that is still a dream.

THICK MOLASSES SPICE COOKIES

Makes 22 to 24 cookies

These cookies are my winter obsession. I had been on the hunt for a thick, soft but not too cakey, deeply spiced, and a little kicky dark molasses cookie for as long as I could remember. I tried dozens over the years, but none were exactly right. Over the pandemic winter that left us devoid of parties and all the usual holiday cheer, I decided that I would at least get this one perfect. (I also ran my local store out of molasses and ground ginger and begged my friends to swing by so I could fling samples off the balcony down to them—don't worry, we're not high up—because we were, at one point, blockaded by cookies.) Do you know what it's like for your apartment to smell like a gingerbread house blew up in it every day for the whole month of December? It was, despite the larger circumstances, a very good time, and at the end, I had these: my forever molasses cookies, and soon, perhaps, yours, too.

- **2⅓ cups (305 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **2 teaspoons (6 grams) ground ginger**
- **¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- **¼ teaspoon ground cloves**
- **¼ teaspoon ground allspice**
- **½ teaspoon baking soda**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- **¾ cup (12 tablespoons, 6 ounces, or 170 grams) unsalted butter, melted, cooled slightly**
- **½ cup (150 grams) molasses (see note)**
- **⅔ cup (145 grams) packed dark-brown sugar**
- **1 large egg yolk (18 grams)**
- **3 tablespoons (45 grams) finely chopped crystallized ginger**
- **6 tablespoons (75 grams) granulated or turbinado sugar, for rolling**

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Whisk the flour, spices, baking soda, salt, and pepper in a large bowl until fully mixed. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Pour in the melted butter, molasses, brown sugar, yolk, and candied ginger. Whisk these together in the center a couple times (until the egg yolk is dispersed); then switch to a spoon or rubber spatula to continue mixing. The dough will be very thick!
3. Scoop the dough into balls—I either use a medium cookie scoop (1½ tablespoons) or take just shy of 2 tablespoons of dough for each. Roll each in your hands briefly to shape it into a ball, then into the granulated or turbinado sugar for coating.
4. Space the cookies evenly on the parchment-lined baking sheet (they barely spread), and bake for 10 to 12 minutes. You want what looks like a quite underbaked cookie. It will feel totally soft on top; you will be sure it's raw. But if you lift a cookie, you'll see that it's one shade darker underneath. They're done. Remove the pan from the oven, and let the cookies cool for 5 minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack. The cookies set as they cool. If you cut into one in the first 15 minutes, you'll yell, "Deb! These are raw in the middle! How could you?" But after that, you will have a more cookielike, perfect texture—crisp outside and tender inside.

Do ahead: *You can chill the dough in the fridge for an hour or even several days before baking it, but let it warm up a bit at room temperature before scooping (trust me, I broke two cookie scoops learning this the hard way). Store the cookies in an airtight container to retain their softness. They keep for up to 2 weeks at room temperature, but their texture is best in the first week.*

Note: *You can use either unsulphured or blackstrap molasses here; I've tested it with both. If you can't get molasses where you are, use treacle. As for the egg yolk, I tested this recipe several times with a whole egg and with just a yolk and vastly prefer the yolk-only version: it's less crunchy and better holds the pillowy shape that I like in a molasses cookie.*

CHALLAH CHEESECAKE BUNS

Makes 12 buns

My father grew up in the Bronx, and he told me that after school, they'd sometimes go to the corner deli and get cream cheese-and-jelly sandwiches. He spoke wistfully of these days, when nobody balked at putting a 1-inch-thick slab (or so he dramatically remembered it) of cream cheese on a sandwich, with no ruminations about cholesterol or arteries. Since then, I've always associated this combination with him but felt the part he left out of the story is that cream cheese and jam together taste like cheesecake, or one of those cheese Danishes I never see enough anymore. Challah bread, stretchy and enriched with eggs and oil, is a close cousin to brioche, and I've had fun tweaking it to make breakfast buns with the easiest and most forgiving dough you could possibly imagine. The filling will seem messy as you roll and slice it, but no matter how crooked they look going into the pan, they are stunning when they emerge from the oven the next morning, glossed to a high challah shine. A lemon glaze is optional but delicious here, especially because the buns aren't heavily sweetened.

dough

- **2 large eggs (100 grams), plus 1 large egg yolk (18 grams)**
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ cup (115 grams) butter, melted, then cooled, plus more for the mixing bowl**
- **⅔ cup (155 grams) milk, any variety**
- **3¾ cups (490 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 packet (2¼ teaspoons, or 7 grams) instant yeast**
- **1¼ teaspoons (4 grams) kosher salt**

filling and assembly

- **8 ounces (225 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **⅓ cup (65 grams) granulated sugar**
- **¼ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **¾ cup (240 grams) raspberry jam, or another that you prefer**
- **1 large egg, (50 grams) beaten with 1 teaspoon water for wash**
- **Poppy seeds, for sprinkling**

glaze (optional)

- **2 cups (240 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **3 to 4 tablespoons (45 to 60 grams) lemon juice**

1. Make the dough: Whisk together the eggs, yolk, granulated sugar, butter, and milk in the bottom of a stand-mixer bowl. Add the flour, yeast, and salt, and mix with the dough hook on low until it comes together; then let the machine knead it for about 5 minutes. Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured counter, and leave it there just long enough so you can coat a mixing bowl with oil; return the dough to the oiled bowl, cover it loosely, and let it rise until doubled, about 2 hours.
2. For the filling and assembly: Butter a 13-by-9-inch (or equivalent size) baking dish, or coat it with nonstick spray.
3. Combine the cream cheese, granulated sugar, and vanilla in a medium bowl (I just use a fork to mix this).
4. On a very well-floured counter, roll out the dough into a rectangle about 16 inches wide on the side facing you and as far away from you as it comfortably goes, usually 13 to 15 inches.
5. Spread the cream cheese mixture all over the rolled-out dough. Dollop the jam over it, and spread it smooth. Roll the dough into a snug spiral; it will stretch to about 18 inches wide.
6. Cut the log very gently—it's going to be a soft mess, so use a sharp serrated knife or flavorless dental floss—into 1½-inch segments. Arrange all the pieces in the prepared baking dish. Brush the tops of the buns with the egg wash, and cover with plastic wrap.
7. From here, you can opt for one of two schedules: Refrigerate the buns overnight, along with the leftover egg wash (both covered), or you can chill the buns for just 30 minutes and bake them right away. If you're using the overnight method, remove the buns from the fridge in the morning and let them warm up for 30 minutes before baking; if you're using the faster chill, no need to give them warm-up time.
8. Heat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
9. Brush the tops of the buns with a second coat of egg wash, and sprinkle with poppy seeds. Bake until the buns are bronzed all over and have an internal temperature of 190°F (90°C), about 30 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.
10. For the glaze, if using: Whisk the confectioners' sugar together with 3 tablespoons lemon juice until smooth, drizzling in an additional tablespoon of lemon juice if needed to loosen the glaze. Drizzle this over the warm buns, or serve it alongside with a spoon.

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FESTIVE FRUIT-FILLED BREADS

THE WELCOMING AROMA OF FRESH-BAKED BREAD IS A DELIGHTFUL ADDITION TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON. SCENTED WITH ORANGE AND FULL OF BRIGHT, FESTIVE FLAVORS, OUR JULEKAKE AND CRESCENT ROLLS ARE THE PERFECT ADDITION TO CELEBRATIONS BIG AND SMALL.

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JULEKAKE

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) loaf

This traditional Norwegian Christmas bread combines tender, enriched dough with the sweet scent of cardamom and cinnamon and then gets bejeweled with dried and candied fruits and drizzled with a simple Sugar Glaze. It packs a fruitcake-like taste without all the hassle, making it a delicious addition to breakfast, brunch, or even an afternoon cup of coffee or cocoa.

3½ to 3¾ cups (438 to 468 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) instant yeast*
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
1¼ teaspoons (2.5 grams) ground cardamom
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon
⅔ cup (160 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole milk, divided
6 tablespoons (84 grams) unsalted butter
⅓ cup (80 grams) water
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature and divided
¼ cup (55 grams) roughly chopped candied orange peel
¼ cup (48 grams) assorted raisins, roughly chopped
¼ cup (40 grams) dried sweetened cranberries, roughly chopped
Sugar Glaze (recipe follows)

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1 cup (125 grams) flour, sugar, yeast, salt, cardamom, and cinnamon by hand until combined.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine ⅔ cup (160 grams) milk, butter, and ⅓ cup (80 grams) water; cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add 1 egg (50 grams); beat at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 2½ cups (313 grams) flour, beating until combined.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. With mixer on low speed, beat until a soft, slightly sticky, and elastic dough forms, 8 to 12 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough may still stick to sides and bottom of bowl but should pass the windowpane test; see Note.) With mixer on low speed, gradually add orange peel, raisins, and cranberries, beating just until combined. (If you do not feel the mix-ins are well distributed by the mixer, you can use your hands to fold and squeeze the dough to help distribute the mix-ins more evenly.)
4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 35 to 50 minutes.
5. Punch down dough; cover and let stand for 10 minutes. On a very lightly floured surface, divide dough into 3 portions (about 340 grams each). Shape each portion into a ball, and gently roll between your hands to create a roughly oval shape; cover and let stand for 15 minutes. Place 1 portion seam side up. Flatten portion into about a 9x5-inch oval, making sure to press out and pop any air bubbles. Starting from one long side, fold dough, about ½ inch at a time, pressing to seal after each fold. Repeat until you have a tight cylinder. Roll cylinder into a 12-inch rope. Repeat with remaining portions. Braid ropes, pinching ends together and tucking under slightly to secure.
6. Spray a 9x5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Place braided dough in prepared pan; gently press braid into an even layer in pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 35 to 40 minutes. (It is OK if dough is puffed above rim of pan.)
7. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
8. In a small bowl, whisk together remaining 1 egg (50 grams) and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) milk. Brush top of dough with egg wash. (If any larger bubbles appear on dough's surface, gently pierce and deflate before egg washing.)
9. Bake for 12 minutes; loosely cover with foil, and rotate pan. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 32 to 38 minutes more. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
10. Drizzle cooled loaf with Sugar Glaze. Store in a bread box or a somewhat airtight container at room temperature for 2 to 3 days.

**We used Platinum® Yeast from Red Star®.*

Note: *To use the windowpane test to check dough for proper gluten development, lightly flour hands and pinch off (don't tear) a small piece of dough. Slowly pull the dough out from the center. If the dough is ready, you will be able to stretch it until it's thin and translucent like a windowpane. If the dough tears, it's not quite ready. Beat for 1 minute, and test again.*

Sugar Glaze

Makes about ⅓ cup

1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
1½ tablespoons (22.5 grams) whole milk

1. In a small bowl, stir together confectioners' sugar and milk until smooth and well combined. Use immediately.

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CRANBERRY-ORANGE CRESCENT ROLLS

Makes 24 rolls

Buttery and rich, these rolls are studded with dried sweetened cranberries, orange zest, and a touch of vanilla and baked to golden perfection. Whether you serve them alongside something sweet or savory, this recipe makes a batch big enough to share all the holiday cheer.

4¼ to 4½ cups (531 to 562 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
2 (0.25-ounce) packages (14 grams) instant yeast*
3½ teaspoons (10.5 grams) kosher salt
¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter
¼ cup (60 grams) water
2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar
3 tablespoons (63 grams) clover honey, divided
2 teaspoons (5 grams) tightly packed orange zest
¾ cup (112 grams) lightly packed dried sweetened cranberries, chopped
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
4 tablespoons (56 grams) unsalted butter, melted

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whisk together 1 cup (125 grams) flour, yeast, and salt by hand.
2. In a small saucepan, heat milk, butter, ¼ cup (60 grams) water, sugar, 2 tablespoons (42 grams) honey, and orange zest over medium-low heat until an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture, and beat at medium-low speed just until combined, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add cranberries, egg, egg yolk, and vanilla; beat at low speed until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 3¼ cups (406 grams) flour, beating until combined.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky, and elastic dough forms, 6 to 9 minutes; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough may still stick to sides and bottom of bowl but should pass the windowpane test; see Notes.) Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a ball.
4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Punch down dough; cover and let stand for 10 minutes or refrigerate overnight. (If refrigerating overnight, punch down dough an additional 1 to 2 times during first hour of refrigeration.) On a lightly floured surface, divide dough in half (about 580 grams each). Gently shape each half into a round; cover and let stand for 15 minutes. Roll half of dough into a 14-inch circle. (Keep remaining dough covered to prevent it from drying out.) Using a pastry wheel, cut dough into 12 equal triangles. Place dough triangles with smoothest side down; starting from the base of each triangle, roll up dough, pressing pointed ends into rolls to seal. Place rolls, pointed end securely tucked under, 1½ to 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining half of dough. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 35 to 45 minutes.
7. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
8. Reserve 2 tablespoons (28 grams) melted butter. Brush rolls with remaining 2 tablespoons (28 grams) melted butter.
9. Bake, one batch at a time, until golden brown, 10 to 14 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking.
10. In a small bowl, whisk together reserved 2 tablespoons (28 grams) butter and remaining 1 tablespoon (21 grams) honey. Brush rolls with honey butter. Let cool on pans for at least 30 minutes before serving. Best enjoyed same day but can be stored in a somewhat airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

**We used Platinum® Yeast from Red Star®.*

Notes: *To use the windowpane test to check dough for proper gluten development, lightly flour hands and pinch off (don't tear) a small piece of dough. Slowly pull the dough out from the center. If the dough is ready, you will be able to stretch it until it's thin and translucent like a windowpane. If the dough tears, it's not quite ready. Beat for 1 minute, and test again.*

Be sure the pointed ends are significantly and securely tucked under your crescent rolls before the second rise and bake for best shape!

the essential...

CROQUEMBOUCHE

TRY OUR SIMPLIFIED AND MINIATURE TAKE ON CROQUEMBOUCHE TO BRING A TOUCH OF FRENCH ELEGANCE TO YOUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

A towering triumph of French pâtisserie, the croquembouche requires mastery of several techniques culminating in a visually stunning and divinely delicious dessert. Loosely translated as "crunch in the mouth," croquembouche is an edible construction held together by an intricate network of hot spun sugar and caramel. Not for nothing is the croquembouche considered a French wedding cake. It's beautiful to behold, but it seems forbidding to the home baker. For our holiday incarnation, we decided to amend the blueprint slightly so this magnificent spectacle can be brought to the home kitchen. We keep the building blocks as pâte à choux and the creamy insulation as the pastry cream but use chocolate glaze as the sweet cement.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY
TRICIA MANZANERO STUEDEMAN
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY LILY SIMPSON

Our step-by-step guide to croquembouche will tackle each technical element. First, we'll walk you through making pâte à choux. A twice-cooked dough—first on the stovetop and again in the oven—choux is like a magic air bubble of pastry. It harnesses the power of steam rather than leavening to rise in the oven. While baking, the outside sets, with the fat crisping into a golden exterior. Inside, the trapped air pockets combine and expand into one perfect void. We fill this golden hollow with luscious pastry cream and stack it tall and proud with a little help from a glossy chocolate glaze. Besides "O Tannenbaum," this profiterole tower will be the most handsome sight of the holidays.

CHOCOLATE-GLAZED MINI CROQUEMBOUCHES

Makes 3 small profiterole trees/85 to 95 profiteroles

Our simplified version of classic croquembouche is designed to bring you all the showstopping glamour of the original but with just half the trouble. We kept the traditional golden choux dough and luxuriously silky pastry cream, but we traded the complex sugar work with a simple chocolate glaze, gluing our profiteroles together with a cocoa drizzle rather than hot spun sugar. The result is a trio of glittering croquembouche pyramids ready to adorn your holiday spread.

Profiteroles:

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- ½ cup (120 grams) water
- ½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- 5 large eggs (250 grams), room temperature

Vanilla Pastry Cream (recipe follows)

Glaze:

- 3 ounces (85 grams) unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped (about ½ cup)
- 6 tablespoons (84 grams) refined coconut oil
- 1½ teaspoons (9 grams) vanilla bean paste
- 3 cups (360 grams) confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 7 tablespoons (105 grams) warm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)

Garnish: assorted gold sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line 4 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Using a permanent marker, draw 30 (1¼-inch) circles 1 to 1½ inches apart on a sheet of parchment paper. Slide template under parchment on a prepared pan.
3. For profiteroles: In a medium saucepan, bring butter, ½ cup (120 grams) water, milk, granulated sugar, and salt to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Add flour, and using a wooden spoon, stir until combined. Cook, stirring constantly, until a skin forms on bottom of pan and mixture pulls away from sides of pan and forms a ball, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; beat at low speed until dough cools slightly, about 1 minute. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition. (Batter

will be shiny and will slowly move back together when a spatula is dragged through it; batter should also fall off paddle so excess is left hanging in a "V" shape.)

4. Transfer some of batter to a large pastry bag fitted with a 7/16-inch round piping tip (Ateco #805). Place piping tip in center of a drawn circle. Hold tip perpendicular ½ inch above pan, and hold parchment paper steady, if needed. Keeping tip stationary, apply even pressure to bag until batter reaches edges of drawn circle. Stop applying pressure, and move tip in a quick circular motion as you lift away. (Each dollop will be 7 to 8 grams each; you want to minimize points, but it's OK if your dollops do have some peaks since they will be smoothed later.) Repeat until pan is full. Wet your finger with water, and press down any points or ragged portions to create a smooth top, if necessary. Carefully slide template out from under piped batter, and place under parchment on other prepared pans; pipe remaining batter, refilling pastry bag as needed.

5. Bake, one batch at a time, for 10 minutes. Rotate pan, and bake until fully puffed and deep golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more. Let cool completely on pans.

6. Using a ¼-inch round piping tip (Ateco #802) and a twisting motion, gently poke a hole in center of bottom of each profiterole. Insert a wooden pick into hole, and move it around to ensure cream will fill entire profiterole.

7. Fill a pastry bag fitted with same piping tip with Vanilla Pastry Cream. Place piping tip into hole in a profiterole, and apply gentle pressure to bag to fill profiterole; scrape away any excess pastry cream from bottom of profiterole. Repeat with remaining profiteroles and remaining Vanilla Pastry Cream. Refrigerate for up to 1 hour.

8. For glaze: In a small saucepan, combine chocolate and coconut oil. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until melted and well combined. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla bean paste. Gradually add confectioners' sugar alternately with warm milk, beginning and ending with confectioners' sugar, stirring until combined after each addition. Whisk until smooth and combined. (Mixture will be shiny and thickened; it will fall off a spatula in ribbons and be the consistency of hot fudge sauce.) Transfer glaze to a medium heatproof bowl.

9. To build one "tree," arrange 12 profiteroles in a filled circle in a single layer on desired serving plate. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Arrange 8 profiteroles on top of first layer. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Arrange 5 profiteroles on top of previous layer. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Repeat process in layers of 3 and 1. Garnish with sprinkles, if desired. Repeat procedure with remaining profiteroles to build 2 more "trees." Serve immediately. Best eaten same day.

Vanilla Pastry Cream

Makes about 5¼ cups

- **5 cups (1,200 grams) whole milk, divided**
- **1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, divided**
- **7 tablespoons (56 grams) cornstarch**
- **¼ cup (31 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **7 large egg yolks (130 grams)**
- **7 tablespoons (98 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **1½ tablespoons (27 grams) vanilla bean paste**

1. In a medium saucepan, combine 4 cups (960 grams) milk and ½ cup (100 grams) sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, just until steaming. (Do not boil.)

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together cornstarch, flour, salt, and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar. Whisk in egg yolks and remaining 1 cup (240 grams) milk until well combined. Gradually add half of warm milk mixture to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Add egg yolk mixture to remaining warm milk mixture in pan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened and mixture no longer tastes starchy, about 2 minutes.

3. Remove from heat. Stir in butter until melted and mixture is well combined. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a large 13x9-inch baking dish. Stir in vanilla bean paste, and spread into a thin layer. Cover with a piece of plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, 2 to 3 hours or up to overnight. When ready to use, whisk pastry cream until smooth. Use immediately.

Choux Building Blocks

Get to know your choux dough through its essential ingredients

UNSALTED BUTTER: Working as both a flavorful fat component and a boost to texture, butter separates the choux from the bread category and firmly places it in the pastry field. During baking, the butter helps create a crisp, rich exterior for choux.

WATER: Water gives your dough flexibility and the ability to expand during baking. In the oven, the water in the dough becomes crucial steam, forcing the dough to shoot up and out to make a hollow bun.

WHOLE MILK: Milk, too, provides flexibility to make your dough pop up during baking, but it also adds richness and tasty milk fat to the choux dough.

GRANULATED SUGAR: Classic, unadorned choux dough isn't intended to be very sweet. Instead, the small amount of sugar in the dough is another boon to colorization during baking, yielding an attractive golden crust.

KOSHER SALT: We bake with kosher salt because, unlike most commercial salt, it doesn't contain iodine, making it taste purer and more palatable. Also, the salt crystals are larger. Table salt is much finer, so you would use half of what a recipe with kosher salt calls for.

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR: The structure of your choux is set by the proteins in the eggs and flour. All-purpose flour has a high enough protein content (10% to 12%) to help your choux dough rise and hold its shape after baking. If you use low-protein flours, like cake or pastry flour, your choux will deflate during cooling.

EGGS: The purpose of eggs in your choux dough is manifold. They inject your dough with structure-building protein, elasticity-boosting moisture, and flavorful fat. The weight and size of your eggs matter, as choux dough will only require just the right amount of excess moisture the eggs give it. We've calibrated this recipe to work with 5 large eggs (250 grams), so weigh them to make sure you have the exact amount called for—no more, no less.

Choux Mastery

We take you through the steps of creating pâte à choux, from stovetop to stand mixer

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line 4 baking sheets with parchment paper. You'll want to bake the choux in individual batches so they can bake evenly.

2. Using a permanent marker, draw 30 (1¼-inch) circles 1 to 1½ inches apart on a sheet of parchment paper. Slide template under parchment on a prepared pan. This parchment paper template will work as your guide when you are piping.

3. In a medium saucepan, bring butter, ½ cup (120 grams) water, milk, granulated sugar, and salt to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Be sure to cube the butter before adding it to the other ingredients. If you add whole sticks of butter and try to bring it to a boil, the butter will take too long to melt and too much water will evaporate.

4. Add flour, and using a wooden spoon, stir until combined. Cook, stirring constantly, until a skin forms on bottom of pan and mixture pulls away from sides of pan and forms a ball, 1 to 2 minutes. As you stir, make sure to remove lingering flour pockets. You're essentially cooking off the excess moisture and removing the raw flour flavor. It should go from looking like mashed potatoes to congealing into a roux-like dough.

5. Transfer mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; beat at low speed until dough cools slightly, about 1 minute. This helps cool down the dough a bit before adding in your eggs.

6. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition. (Batter will be shiny and will slowly move back together when a spatula is dragged through it; batter should also fall off paddle so excess is left hanging in a "V" shape.) When beating in the eggs, your dough might look broken at first, but it will eventually come together. Beyond using a spatula to test your dough, the paddle attachment can be used to conduct the "V" shape test as well.

Tip-Top Piping

See how to masterfully pipe and bake your pâte à choux

1. Transfer some of batter to a large pastry bag fitted with a 7/16-inch round piping tip (Ateco #805). For easier filling, place pastry bag, tip side down, in a quart-size container or tall glass jar; fold the edges of the bag outward over the rim of the container to open and hold the bag in place.

2. Place piping tip in center of a drawn circle. Hold tip perpendicular ½ inch above pan, and hold parchment paper steady, if needed.

3. Keeping tip stationary, apply even pressure to bag until batter reaches edges of drawn circle. Stop applying pressure, and move tip in a quick circular motion as you lift away. (Each dollop will be 7 to 8 grams each; you want to minimize points, but it's OK if your dollops do have some peaks since they will be smoothed later.)

4. Repeat until pan is full. Wet your finger with water, and press down any points to create a smooth top, if necessary.

Pastry Cream Power

Learn how to make the dreamiest, creamiest pastry cream

1. In a medium saucepan, combine 4 cups (960 grams) milk and ½ cup (100 grams) sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, just until steaming. (Do not boil.) Make sure your mixture is steaming, not boiling. If it's too hot, it'll cook the yolk mixture made in the next step.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together cornstarch, flour, salt, and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar. Whisk in egg yolks and remaining 1 cup (240 grams) milk until well combined. Gradually add half of warm milk mixture to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. This is tempering and lightening up the yolks, ensuring the mixture won't turn into scrambled egg when cooked on the stove.

3. Add egg yolk mixture to remaining warm milk mixture in pan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened and mixture no longer tastes starchy, about 2 minutes. Your pastry cream will thicken considerably during this second round of heating. Do not step away from the stove during this time, as constant whisking is key to keeping your pastry cream from curdling.

4. Remove from heat. Stir in butter until melted and mixture is well combined. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a large 13x9-inch baking dish. Thanks to a quick press through your fine-mesh sieve, any tiny curdled bits of egg will be held back from the creamy finished product.

5. Cover with a piece of plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, 2 to 3 hours or up to overnight. When ready to use, whisk pastry cream until smooth. Although the pâte à choux is best served the day it is baked, the pastry cream is a perfect component of the croquembouche to make ahead of time. The pastry cream will become quite firm in the refrigerator, so give it a vigorous whisk before filling your profiteroles.

Building the Great Pyramids

Time to arrange and assemble your croquembouche masterpiece

1. To build one "tree," arrange 12 profiteroles in a filled circle in a single layer on desired serving plate. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Arrange 8 profiteroles on top of first layer. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Stir glaze periodically; if needed, microwave on high in 5-second intervals until loosened.

2. Arrange 5 profiteroles on top of previous layer. Using a spoon, drizzle tops of profiteroles with glaze, and spread as desired. Repeat process in layers of 3 and 1. Garnish with sprinkles, if desired. Repeat procedure with remaining profiteroles to build 2 more "trees." Since profiterole yields may vary slightly, it's a good idea to count them beforehand and divvy out the amount for each tree, adjusting layers as needed. Any extras can (and should) be enjoyed as snacks!

CHEERS TO Chestnut

SYNONYMOUS WITH HOLIDAY DECADENCE, THE DELICIOUS CHESTNUT OFFERS RICH, EARTHY SWEETNESS IN MANY FORMS, FROM CHESTNUT CREAM TO MARRONS GLACÉS. IN THIS COLLECTION, WE HIGHLIGHT THE CHARM OF CHESTNUTS IN CHEESECAKE, HAND PIES, AND MORE.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD STYLING BY NANCY MCHUGHES
STYLING BY SIDNEY BRAGIEL

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CHESTNUT GINGERSNAP CHEESECAKE WITH MOLASSES WHIPPED CREAM

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

Complemented by the warm spice of a gingersnap crust and caramel flavor of a Molasses Whipped Cream, the silky chestnut filling of this cheesecake delivers divine holiday comfort. Its stunning appearance is only rivaled by its sophisticated flavor.

- **2 (8-ounce) packages (454 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cloves**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature**
- **3 large egg yolks (54 grams), room temperature**
- **¾ cup (180 grams) crème fraîche, room temperature**
- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) fresh orange juice**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **1⅓ cups (426 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream***
- **Boiling water**
- **Chestnut-Gingersnap Crust (recipe follows)**
- **Molasses Whipped Cream (recipe follows)**
- **Garnish: crystallized ginger strips, candied orange peel strips**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth. Add sugar and cloves, and beat at medium-low speed until sugar dissolves and mixture is smooth. With mixer on medium speed, add eggs and egg yolks, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition. Add crème fraîche, orange juice, and vanilla. Beat until smooth and creamy. Fold in chestnut cream.
3. Wrap bottom and sides of pan with Chestnut-Gingersnap Crust in a layer of heavy-duty foil; place in a large oven bag, tucking ends so bag is flush with top edge of pan. (If you do not use an oven bag, wrap pan in a double layer of foil.) Place springform pan in a roasting pan, and pour filling into Chestnut-Gingersnap Crust. Place roasting pan in oven, and pour boiling water into roasting pan to come about 1 inch up sides of springform pan.
4. Bake until edges are just set, with a slight wobble in center, 1 hour and 20 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes. Carefully remove cheesecake from water bath, and let cool completely in pan on a wire rack, 1½ to 2 hours. (Once pan is cool enough to handle, carefully remove bag and foil from sides.) Refrigerate in pan on a wire rack overnight, loosely covering with foil only when completely cool to prevent condensation from forming on top of cheesecake.
5. Carefully remove chilled cheesecake from pan, and transfer to a serving plate.
6. Place Molasses Whipped Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch petal piping tip (Wilton No. 104). Pipe ribbons of whipped cream on top of cheesecake. Garnish with ginger and orange peel, if desired.

**We used Clement Faugier Crème de Marrons Chestnut Spread.*

Chestnut-Gingersnap Crust

Makes 1 (9-inch) crust

- **1 (12-ounce) box (340 grams) gingersnap cookies**
- **1 cup (150 grams) chopped peeled roasted chestnuts**
- **6 tablespoons (84 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **2 tablespoons (28 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar**
- **2 teaspoons (3 grams) packed orange zest (about 1 orange)**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**

1. Lightly spray a 9-inch spring form pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In the bowl of a food processor, place gingersnaps and chestnuts; process until finely ground. Transfer to a medium bowl, and add melted butter, brown sugar, orange zest, salt, and pepper. Stir until well combined. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of prepared pan, stopping ½ inch from top edge of pan.
3. Bake until set and fragrant, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

Molasses Whipped Cream

Makes about 2 cups

- **1 cup (240 grams) cold heavy whipping cream**
- **3 tablespoons (21 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **1 tablespoon (21 grams) molasses**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) cornstarch**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat all ingredients at high speed until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 24 hours.

HOW-TO

The secret to the ruffled design on our cheesecake is a ½-inch petal piping tip and even, methodical pressure. To make a line, pipe a tight "S" chain until you run out of space. Try not to break the chain once you begin, as it will make the design look fractured.

CHESTNUT TORTELLINI DOLCI

Makes about 16 hand pies

These half-moon pastries are based on the delectable Italian hand pie, tortellini dolci. Often served during Carnival or Mardi Gras, tortellini dolci can have any number of fillings, from marmalade to chocolate cream. Here, we opted for a chestnut and chocolate filling that has a touch of rum.

2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
1 teaspoon (4 grams) granulated sugar
1 cup (227 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
¼ to ½ cup (60 to 120 grams) ice water
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 tablespoon (15 grams) heavy whipping cream
Chocolate-Chestnut Filling (recipe follows)
Garnish: Cinnamon-Turmeric Confectioners' Sugar (recipe follows)

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, place flour, salt, and sugar; pulse until combined. Add cold butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly. With processor running, add ¼ to ½ cup (60 to 120 grams) ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, just until dough comes together.
2. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough in half, and shape into disks. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough to about ⅛-inch thickness. (Keep remaining dough in refrigerator until ready to use.) Using a 4-inch fluted round cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps. Repeat with remaining dough.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and cream.
6. Place 1 tablespoon (20 grams) Chocolate-Chestnut Filling slightly off-center on each dough circle. Brush edges of each circle with egg wash. Fold dough in half so edges meet, pressing to seal, and crimp edges with tines of a fork. Transfer to prepared pan. Brush with egg wash, and cut 2 small slits in tops.
7. Bake until lightly golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely on pan. Garnish with Cinnamon-Turmeric Confectioners' Sugar, if desired.

Chocolate-Chestnut Filling

Makes about 1 cup

4 ounces (113 grams) 60% cacao semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
½ cup (160 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream
¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream
1 cup (150 grams) roughly chopped peeled roasted chestnuts
1 teaspoon (4 grams) rum extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a large bowl, place chocolate.
2. In a small saucepan, bring chestnut cream and cream to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Immediately remove from heat, and pour over chocolate. Stir until a smooth ganache forms. Stir in chestnuts, rum extract, and salt. Let cool for 15 minutes. Refrigerate until thickened, at least 1 hour or up to 48 hours.

Cinnamon-Turmeric Confectioners' Sugar

Makes about 1 tablespoon

1 tablespoon (7 grams) confectioners' sugar
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground turmeric
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon

1. In a small bowl, whisk together all ingredients.

CANDIED CHESTNUT PECAN CAKE

Makes 1 (12- to 15-cup) Bundt cake

Our editor-in-chief, Brian, has long loved the delicate flavor and texture of marrons glacés, or candied chestnuts, which are big in France but mostly unheard of stateside. But Brian is looking to jump-start a marrons glacés revolution with this upside-down cake. Candied chestnuts, apple, and pecans form a glistening, sugared crown over a browned butter-accented, tender-crumbed cake. Be warned: one taste will lead to a lifelong love of marrons glacés.

Browned butter:
¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter

Topping:
1 cup (244 grams) quartered candied chestnuts
¾ cup (85 grams) chopped pecans*
¾ cup (75 grams) chopped Honeycrisp apple
½ cup (110 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, melted

Batter:
1¾ cups (350 grams) granulated sugar
3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (18 grams) vanilla bean paste

CHOICE CHESTNUTS

For these recipes we used the following chestnut products, all available at *amazon.com*:

- Gefen Organic Whole Roasted and Peeled Chestnuts
- Clement Faugier Crème de Marrons Chestnut Spread
- Rex Marron Glacé with Syrup

2⅓ cups (292 grams) cake flour
1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking soda
¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg
¾ cup (180 grams) full-fat Greek yogurt, room temperature

1. For browned butter: In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Cook until butter turns a medium-brown color and has a nutty aroma, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a heatproof bowl, and refrigerate until solidified, about 1 hour. (See Note.)
2. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Spray a 12- to 15-cup Bundt or tube pan with baking spray with flour.
3. For topping: In a medium bowl, stir together chestnuts, pecans, apple, brown sugar, and melted butter until well combined. Press firmly into bottom of prepared pan.
4. For batter: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat browned butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla bean paste.
5. In another medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture to butter mixture in three additions alternately with yogurt, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Spoon batter into prepared pan, and spread into an even layer. Tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter several times to settle batter and release any air bubbles.
6. Bake until golden and a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack over a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet. Let cool completely.

**We used Schermer Pecan Halves.*

Note: *You should end up with about 137 grams browned butter. If you let your butter chill for longer than 1 hour, you may need to soften it before mixing with the sugar.*

ROSEMARY-CHESTNUT CREAM TART

Makes 1 (9-inch) tart

For the perfect pairing to our brown sugar- and vanilla-punctuated chestnut filling, we chose an aromatic rosemary crust to work as the base and dual vanilla and chestnut-cocoa creams to dot the surface. The final result is symphony of flavors and textures, ideal for a holiday showstopper.

1 cup (320 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream
½ cup (120 grams) heavy whipping cream
½ cup (120 grams) whole milk
¼ cup (31 grams) all-purpose flour
¼ cup (55 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
1 large egg (50 grams)
2 large egg yolks (37 grams)
1 tablespoon (21 grams) vanilla bean paste
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
Rosemary Shortbread Crust (recipe follows)
Vanilla Whipped Cream (recipe follows)
Chestnut-Cocoa Whipped Cream (recipe follows)
Garnish: fresh rosemary

1. In a medium saucepan, bring chestnut cream, cream, and milk to a boil over medium heat.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, brown sugar, egg, egg yolks, vanilla bean paste, and salt. Slowly add hot chestnut mixture, whisking constantly. Return mixture to saucepan, and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened. Stir in butter until completely combined.
3. Strain pastry cream through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of pastry cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until completely cool, about 3 hours.
4. Stir cooled pastry cream. Spoon into prepared Rosemary Shortbread Crust, and spread evenly.
5. Place half of Vanilla Whipped Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a ¼-inch round piping tip (Ateco #802); place remaining Vanilla Whipped Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch closed star piping tip (Ateco #846). Place half of Chestnut-Cocoa Whipped Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a ¼-inch open star piping tip (Ateco #822); place remaining Chestnut-Cocoa Whipped Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch round piping tip (Ateco #806). Pipe whipped creams on top of tart as desired. Garnish with rosemary, if desired.

Rosemary Shortbread Crust

Makes 1 (9½-inch) crust

1¼ cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon (4 gram) chopped fresh rosemary
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Spray a 9½-inch fluted round removable-bottom tart pan with cooking spray.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, place all ingredients; process until combined. (Mixture will be crumbly but will hold together when pressed.) Press dough into bottom and up sides of prepared pan. Freeze for 20 minutes.
3. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack.

Vanilla Whipped Cream

Makes about 1 cup

½ cup (120 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons (14 grams) confectioners' sugar
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) cornstarch
½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat all ingredients at high speed until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

Chestnut-Cocoa Whipped Cream

Makes about 1 cup

½ cup (120 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon (7 grams) confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons (4 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon (3 grams) cornstarch
½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
5 tablespoons (100 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cold cream, confectioners' sugar, cocoa, cornstarch, vanilla, and salt at high speed until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Fold in chestnut cream. Refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

CHINON Charm

BY JAMIE SCHLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

STEP INSIDE JAMIE SCHLER'S
HÔTEL DIDEROT HOME FOR
A GLIMPSE OF THE HOLIDAYS
IN THE LOIRE VALLEY

In the Loire Valley's small town of Chinon, France, located on the Vienne river, cookbook author and food writer Jamie Schler owns and runs the cozy and charming Hôtel Diderot with her husband, Jean-Pierre. When the couple purchased the hotel, which dates back to the 1400s, part of their contract stipulated that Jamie had to spend two weeks learning the jam-making process she was inheriting from the previous owner. It's tradition that hotel guests are treated to breakfast each morning in front of the hotel's roaring fireplace, where baskets of breads are served with fresh chèvre and homemade jams. Currently, more than 50 varieties of jam are made from local fruit throughout the year. When Jamie's not spending time with guests or making jams, she's baking in her home kitchen, located inside an apartment in the hotel. During the holidays, you'll find her preparing classic French holiday recipes, including stollen, a decadent chocolate-chestnut fondant cake, and cookies.

GO THERE
To book a stay at Hôtel Diderot, visit *hoteldiderot.com*.

CHOCOLATE CHESTNUT FONDANT

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

To the French, a fondant is an ethereal cake-like confection, dense and thick, made with little or no flour, meltingly smooth on the tongue, its immediate burst of richness fading away and leaving a delicate essence, a flavor that lingers. This fondant au chocolat et marrons, *chocolate and chestnut fondant, is less cake than truffle, so dense yet surprisingly delicate, and makes for one spectacular holiday treat. The addition of a tablespoon of rum or Grand Marnier would be truly festive. For an especially elegant dessert, serve with crème anglaise, an unsweetened or very lightly sweetened whipped cream, or a berry coulis or sauce.*

- **7 ounces (200 grams) 70% cacao dark chocolate, roughly chopped**
- **11 tablespoons (160 grams) unsalted butter**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature**
- **1 (17.6-ounce) can (500 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream (see Notes)**
- **1 gently rounded tablespoon (11 grams) flour (see Notes)**
- **Garnish: confectioners' sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter an 8-inch round cake pan or baking dish. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.
2. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, place chocolate and butter. Heat on high in 30-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted and smooth (about 1½ minutes total). Let cool completely.
3. In a large bowl, whisk eggs until blended. Whisk in crème de marrons. Gradually whisk in chocolate mixture, being careful not to splatter. Whisk in flour. Pour batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until puffed, center is set and cracking a bit, and surface is matte (almost like brownies), 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely before serving. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired.

Notes: *Chestnut cream, also known as crème de marrons, is a sweetened chestnut spread. We used Clement Faugier Crème de Marrons de l'Ardèche, available at* amazon.com.

Jamie used chestnut flour, but you could also use all-purpose flour or even cake flour if that's what you have on hand.

ALSATIAN STOLLEN

Makes 1 loaf

Often called Christstollen, this sweet cakelike bread studded with candied fruit, fragrant with orange and rum, and topped with a snowy layer of confectioners' sugar is a Christmas specialty of the Alsace region of France. With its German heritage, this is the quick version of yeasted stollen, with finely ground nuts replacing the traditional marzipan usually nestled in the center.

4 cups (500 grams) all-purpose flour
1½ cups (150 grams) finely ground almonds or hazelnuts
4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder
1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cardamom
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg
Zest of 1 large orange (about 1¼ teaspoons or 8 grams)
¾ cup plus 2 teaspoons (180 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
2 cups (200 grams) dried cranberries or a mix of dried cranberries, currants, and raisins
3.5 ounces (100 grams) candied citrus peel
1 cup (250 grams) quark, fromage frais, or full-fat Greek yogurt
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
2 tablespoons (30 grams) dark rum
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
¼ to ½ teaspoon (1 to 2 grams) almond extract
3 to 4 tablespoons (42 to 56 grams) unsalted butter, softened
⅓ cup (40 grams) confectioners' sugar

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, ground nuts, baking powder, salt, cardamom, nutmeg, and orange zest until combined. Add cubed butter, and using your fingertips, rub butter into flour mixture until there are no more lumps of butter and mixture resembles wet sand. (There should be no clumps of zest; it should be evenly distributed throughout.) Add granulated sugar, cranberries, and candied peel, and toss well until combined.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together quark, eggs, rum, and extracts until smooth. Pour over flour mixture, and using a fork or wooden spoon, fold and blend until dry ingredients are moistened and a dough forms.
3. Scrape dough out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead until dough is smooth, elastic, and no longer sticky, 10 to 15 minutes, adding extra flour as needed.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Shape dough into a 11-inch oval with slightly tapered ends. Make a deep, exaggerated indentation down long side of dough about one-third of the way in. (If the indentation is not deep enough, it will be lost in baking.) Place on prepared pan.
6. Bake for 45 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C), and bake for 15 minutes more, loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Immediately brush entire top and sides of hot loaf with softened butter. Generously dust with confectioners' sugar.

ZIMTSTERNE (CINNAMON STARS)

Makes about 12 cookies

Bredele are cookies baked in the Alsace region of France for the Christmas season. There are a wide variety of traditional bredele baked and served during the holidays, one of which is Zimtsterne, *or cinnamon stars. Zimtsterne are cinnamon and spice cookies, dense, chewy, made of a simple meringue blended with finely ground nuts and spices and topped with a thin, crispy, snowy-white icing, an addictive and joyously gluten-free Christmas treat.*

2 large egg whites (60 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (5 grams) fresh lemon juice (about ½ lemon)
¼ teaspoon plus 1 pinch salt, divided
1⅔ cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting
½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
2⅔ cups (256 grams) plus 3 tablespoons (18 grams) superfine almond flour*
2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon (2 grams) gingerbread spice (see Notes)

1. In a large bowl, beat egg whites with a mixer at low speed for 15 seconds; gradually increase mixer speed to high, beating until foamy. Add lemon juice and pinch salt, and beat until just opaque, about 1 minute. Increase mixer speed to high; gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until combined. Beat until meringue is thick and slightly increased in volume, about 2 minutes.
2. Transfer 2 heaping tablespoons (27 grams) meringue to a small bowl; cover and refrigerate.
3. Add vanilla to remaining meringue, and beat at medium speed until combined.
4. In a medium bowl, stir together 2⅔ cups (256 grams) flour, cinnamon, gingerbread spice, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to meringue, beating until combined.
5. Generously dust work surface with confectioners' sugar. Scrape dough onto work surface. Fold and knead up to remaining 3 tablespoons (18 grams) flour into dough as needed until it is stiff enough to shape into a ball. (Dough will be sticky but not wet.) Divide dough in half (about 255 grams each). Wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or up to overnight.
6. Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
7. Dust work surface and rolling pin with confectioners' sugar. Working with one half of dough at a time, roll dough to ¼- to ⅜-inch thickness. Using a 3½-inch star-shaped cutter, cut dough, rerolling scraps as necessary, and gently place 1 to 1½ inches apart on prepared pan. Using an offset spatula, carefully spread 1 teaspoon (2 grams) reserved meringue into a thin layer on each cookie, smoothing well. (See Notes.)
8. Bake until set and baked on sides and icing is matte and still white, 15 to 20 minutes. (The cookies will continue to firm up once out of the oven; if left in too long, the icing will become tinged with a pale brown color and the points of the stars will harden.) Remove from pan, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 10 days.

**You can also use a mix of almond flour and finely ground hazelnut meal.*

Notes: *Gingerbread spice is a seasonal offering. To make your own, whisk together 1 tablespoon (6 grams) ground ginger, 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon, 1¼ teaspoons (2.5 grams) ground nutmeg, ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cloves, and ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground allspice.*

The meringue icing will not smooth in the oven; it will come out exactly as it goes in!

Château of Chenonceau

A Loire Valley must-visit during the holidays

In a region studded with enchanting châteaux, the Château of Chenonceau is exceptional and located about an hour's drive from Chinon. This exquisite example of Renaissance architecture, elegantly perched above the water and surrounded by gardens, was owned, lived in, transformed, furnished, and decorated by a series of women, including Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de' Medici, endowing the château with the name *le château des dames*—"the ladies' château." No matter how often I visit, the magnificent galleries, richly furnished rooms embellished by magnificent floral arrangements, lovely chapel, and, of course, my favorite spot, the kitchens, never cease to take my breath away. During the winter holiday season, Chenonceau is always dressed in its most festive Christmas finery, an event I never miss, year after year.

GO THERE
Château de Chenonceau
37150 Chenonceaux
chenonceau.com

Jamie's Chinon

Don't miss these favorite boutiques and bakeries in Chinon

Boutique Confluences (3 rue Jean Jacques Rousseau) is my favorite shop to buy a gift for a friend, family member, and, yes, myself. You'll find gorgeous tableware and the coolest kitchen utensils, stunning linens and cushions, jewelry and handbags, lamps, and home decorations. Owners Corinne and Yves Rasquain have exquisite taste, selecting only the most beautiful artisan objects. The difficulty is walking out of this lovely shop with only one thing.

Pierre Colin opened his pastry and chocolate shop **Majuscule à Pâtisserie** (10 rue Jean Jacques Rousseau) in 2019 at the age of 22, and locals cannot get enough of his pastries—as beautiful to look at as they are fabulous to eat. My favorites are his lemon-lime tarts, his chocolate St. Honoré, and classic Paris-Brest. His melt-in-the-mouth chocolates are out of this world, and in the summer, he offers intensely flavored sorbets. Across the street is his atelier with large glass windows that allow you to watch him at work.

Bakeries are everywhere in Chinon, as they are in France, but I'm a fanatic about the incredible artisan and traditional breads at **Fournil du Château** (16 rue Jean Jacques Rousseau). Laurent Cherbonnier oversees the ovens, and his wife, Sylvie, is behind the glass cases filled with enticing treats, both savory and sweet. Don't miss this master baker's *fouace rabelais*, a dark bread enriched with spices, saffron, and walnuts that's been a local specialty since medieval times.

The stunning 15th-century building and the strains of Edith Piaf on an old gramophone set the ambience for the inviting **Librairie Ancienne Lacoste** (45 rue Voltaire) where Jacques Lacoste sells rare, antique, and modern books as well as old engravings. I head straight to the collection of old cookbooks.

SOUPE
LE VIN

STRASBOURG
CAPITALE DE NOËL

STEPPING INTO STRASBOURG, FRANCE, DURING THE HOLIDAYS IS LIKE STEPPING INTO A BEAUTIFULLY PACKAGED CHRISTMAS CONFECTION

BY BROOKE BELL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

Each holiday season on the Grande Île de Strasbourg, close to where France meets Germany, the *Christkindelsmärik* spans more than 300 stalls in squares throughout the city center. This Christmas market has existed since 1570 and is one of the oldest and most famous in Europe.

It doesn't take long to realize this is quite literally the capital of Christmas. Everything sparkles, shines, twinkles, and is bedecked for the holidays. Twist through the city's pedestrian-only cobblestone streets and find local bakeries, boutiques, restaurants, and flower shops donning elaborate window displays and decorations. In the evening, magnificent light displays are everywhere, and angels, chandeliers, and stars strung over the streets give them a magical, festive glow. Each year, the Great Christmas Tree anchors Place Kléber and stands nearly 100 feet tall. Nearby, the Historic Christ Child Market in Place Broglie dates back to 1871 and is situated outside the stately Hôtel de ville (not an actual hotel, but the town hall). At Place de la Cathédrale, wooden market stalls shrouded in greenery shy in comparison to the towering cathedral that serves as a majestic backdrop. Not far away, the La Petite France area is one of the most picturesque spots in Strasbourg, overlooking small canals that are flanked by half-timbered buildings iconic to the region's architecture. Head to the quaint Marche de Noël des Irréductibles Petits Producteurs d'Alsace at Place des Meuniers that features small, local producers and their jams (confitures), flours, and wines.

Throughout the city, stalls are filled with traditional crafts and goods of the Alsace, including wooden Christmas pyramids that rotate from the warm air of lit candles, trains and toys, snow globes, stuffed gingerbread dolls and ornaments soon to be beloved by children, brightly painted nutcrackers and

Christmas trees, and hand-painted fluted cake molds. Some stalls are dedicated to selling everything needed to outfit a manger scene, allowing customers to hand-pick each element, from the wise men to bottle brush trees. Others sell miniature replicas of renowned buildings in Strasbourg so a snow-covered Christmas village can be created at home. For those looking to grow their Christmas ornament collection, glass baubles hang from booths and shimmer in every shape, size, and color imaginable.

But the markets aren't just filled with crafts and holiday gifts. Stands specialize in *bredele*, *sablé*-style biscuits (cookies) baked during the Advent season, with shapes ranging from Linzers to spritzes and flavors that include almond, butter, and orange. You'll also find *männele*, which are brioche dough figures that resemble Saint Nicholas and are made on St. Nicholas Day (December 6). Oftentimes, raisins or chocolate

chips are used to represent his eyes. Then there are the gorgeous almond paste candies, or *pâte d'amandes*, piled high in baskets and crafted into colorful fruits, vegetables, and even croissants and *pain au chocolat*. On the savory side, the food is a beautiful confluence of France and Germany. Plan to snack on a *bretzel* (German for "pretzel"); *spätzle* (a German egg noodle pasta dish); Alsatian *flammekueche*, or *tarte flambée*, which features a layer of crème fraîche or *fromage blanc*, bacon lardons, and onions baked on a baguette or thin flatbread-like dough; and choucroute, an incredible local dish of sauerkraut, sausages, and other salted meats.

At every turn, *vin chaud* stands show off large pots of steaming mulled wine that's been infused with citrus and spices. Ladles fill decorative holiday cups perfect for keeping hands warm. Every vin chaud formula is slightly different, and it's a fun task trying to pick a favorite.

Shop and stroll through this Christmas wonderland, vin chaud in hand, and be sure to stop in Mireille Oster Pain d'épices on rue des Dentelles, where they specialize in making the French spice cake. Their stunning Déclaration d'Amour pain d'épices makes a great gift and is topped with five slices of candied orange so you can declare your love the French way: "I love you, a little, a lot, passionately, madly."

For those who love Christmas—the flavors and magic of the season—Strasbourg awaits.

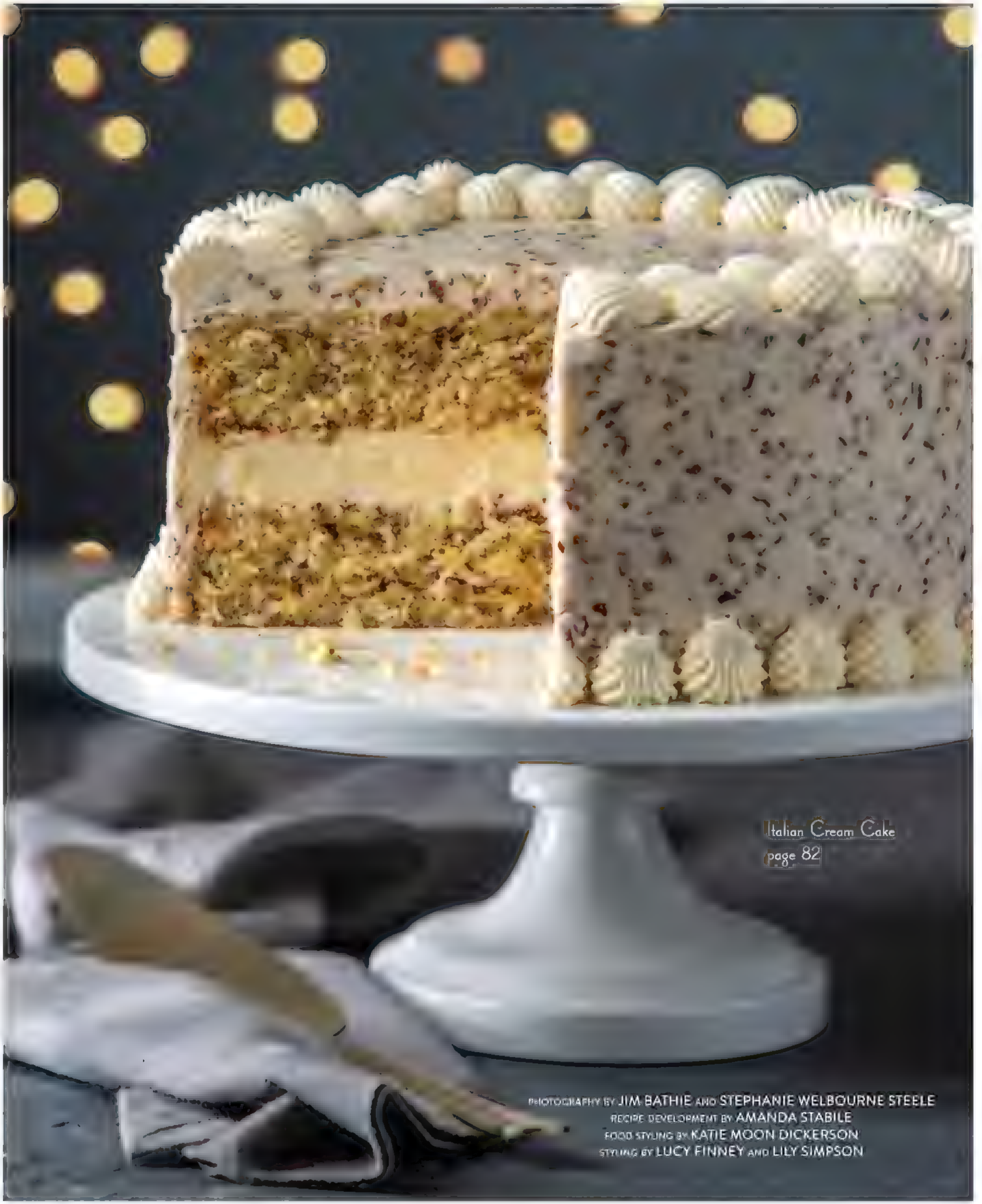
GO THERE

Visit *noel.strasbourg.eu* for more information on the 2022 market, which begins November 25.

If you want to visit Strasbourg with us in December 2023, email *events@bakefromscratch.com* to be placed on our interest list to be the first to learn about dates and registration.

MASTERING THE ART .. OF .. holiday baking

INCORPORATE THE MOST FESTIVE FLAVORS OF THE SEASON INTO COOKIES, SCONES, AND MORE WITH THIS COLLECTION OF HOLIDAY TREATS



Italian Cream Cake
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM BATHIE AND STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY LUCY FINNEY AND LILY SIMPSON

SAVE TIME FOR *celebrating*

THE HOLIDAY BAKING SEASON CAN BE HECTIC, BUT A FEW MAKE-AHEAD TIPS AND TRICKS CAN SAVE YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON. MIX OR MAKE SOME OF YOUR DOUGHS OR TOPPINGS AHEAD OF TIME, AND REFRIGERATE OR FREEZE THEM TO BE BAKED OR ASSEMBLED LATER. TIME SPENT IN THE KITCHEN IS NEVER TIME WASTED, BUT THESE PREP-AHEAD TIPS WILL GIVE YOU TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST AROUND THE HOLIDAYS, TIME SPENT WITH LOVED ONES.

BISCUITS AND SCONES

A golden, steamy scone or biscuit makes for the most festive of mornings. Keep bags of these buttery beauties in your freezer and always enjoy them on-demand. As a bonus, the chill resolidifies the butter pieces in these baked goods, meaning beautiful lift and texture once baked.

Freeze: Arrange unbaked cut scones or biscuits close together—but not touching—on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Loosely cover and freeze until firm. Wrap individually in plastic wrap, and store in an airtight container or freezer-safe resealable plastic bag until the cravings strike. Freeze unbaked scones and biscuits for 1 to 2 months.

Use: Bake frozen scones or biscuits as directed, adding additional baking time as needed. (When done, an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center will register 200°F [93°C] to 205°F [96°C].)

TOPPINGS

Sometimes, saving time can be as simple as having streusel stored in your freezer ready to top your favorite muffins, crisps, coffee cakes, and quick breads. The topping on our Gingerbread Streusel Mini Loaves is the perfect candidate.

Refrigerate: Once made, streusel can be refrigerated in an airtight container or resealable plastic bag for up to 4 days.

Freeze: Stored in an airtight container or freezer-safe resealable plastic bag, streusel can be frozen for up to 1 month, and there's no need to thaw before using. Simply sprinkle and bake!

CAKES

From individual layers to ornate Bundts, several types of cakes freeze well. You can bake and store them beforehand and then thaw when needed. Cakes take time and attention, which can be hard to come by during the holidays, so freezing your cake layers could be the time-saver that makes a layer cake achievable.

Freeze: Once your cakes are completely cool, wrap them in a double layer of plastic wrap followed by a sheet or two of foil. If they can fit, slip each layer in a freezer-safe resealable plastic bag for an additional barrier. Freeze, placing flat and stacking layers if needed, for up to 2 months.

Use: Thaw wrapped, frozen cakes, placed flat and in a single layer, in the refrigerator overnight and then frost or finish as desired. You can also let them thaw at room temperature in a pinch, but the refrigerator route is the most ideal.

FROSTINGS

Believe it or not, frosting also stores incredibly well! Several buttercreams and frostings—American, cream cheese, Italian, and Swiss, to name a few—can be refrigerated or frozen to decorate and adorn future baked goods. However, delicate mixtures, like those that incorporate whipped cream into the frosting, are best made the day of.

Refrigerate: Once it has reached fluffy perfection, spoon frosting into a freezer-safe airtight container, placing plastic wrap directly on the surface. Be mindful of where you place your frostings in your refrigerator; the fat in frostings may absorb strong odors like onion and garlic. Buttercreams can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.

Freeze: Freeze buttercreams like American and cream cheese for up to 3 months. Meringue-based buttercreams like Swiss and Italian should be used within 1 month.

Use: Pop frozen buttercream in the refrigerator to thaw overnight. When ready to use, let stand on the counter until room temperature. Rewhip and you can pipe, swoop, and swirl to your heart's content.

COOKIES

Holiday cookie-baking can be daunting. With numerous doughs and decorations, the work quickly begins to multiply. Luckily, many cookie doughs freeze beautifully, meaning you can whip them up now and bake them another day. Of course, there are some exceptions, but the recipes in this collection freeze beautifully after being shaped into a disk and wrapped up tightly.

Refrigerate: For roll-out doughs like our Iced Gingerbread Cookies and Raspberry-Apricot Linzer Cookies, once the dough has been shaped into a disk and wrapped in plastic wrap, it can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. When it comes time to roll out, simply let it sit on the counter for 10 to 15 minutes and then proceed with the recipe as written.

Freeze: Cookie dough can be frozen in an airtight container or freezer-safe resealable plastic bag for up to 1 month. When it comes time to bake off your cookies, place the disks of dough in the refrigerator to thaw overnight and then roll, slice, and set your cookies on baking sheets. After the dough has been allowed to thaw, you'll finish and bake the cookies as directed, adding more time if needed.

ICED GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Makes about 36 cookies

These chewy Iced Gingerbread Cookies are as simple as they are stunning. Instead of fancy cookie stamps, we used a fork and a spoon, pressing the tines or tip of the spoon into the cutout dough before baking. Coated with an easy stir-together glaze, each cookie's design shines through like patterns on a frosted window.

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- ½ cup (170 grams) unsulphured molasses
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract*
- 2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3½ teaspoons (7 grams) gingerbread spice (see Notes) or pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon (1.25 grams) baking soda
- 1¼ cups (150 grams) confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) hot water (120°F/49°C to 130°F/54°C)

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until creamy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, beating well. Beat in molasses and vanilla.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, gingerbread or pie spice, salt, cinnamon, and baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Turn out dough, and shape into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 2 hours or up to 3 days.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough to ¼-inch thickness. (Keep remaining dough refrigerated until ready to use.) Using a 3-inch round cutter, cut dough, and place 1 inch apart on prepared pans. Decorate cookies by pressing floured fork tines, tip of a spoon, or edge of cookie cutter into dough in desired patterns. (See Notes.) Repeat with remaining dough.
5. Bake until edges are slightly dark and cookies look dry and set in center, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.
6. In a small bowl, stir together confectioners' sugar and 3 tablespoons (45 grams) hot water until combined. Dip cookies into glaze, and let stand on a wire rack until dry. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Rodelle Vanilla Extract.*

Notes: *Gingerbread spice is a seasonal offering. To make your own, whisk together 1 tablespoon (6 grams) ground ginger, 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon, 1¼ teaspoons (2.5 grams) ground nutmeg, ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cloves, and ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground allspice.*

Indentations for decorations have to be kind of deep; otherwise, the decorations are lost in baking when the cookies puff up.

ITALIAN CREAM CAKE

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

A vintage recipe with an array of flavors and textures at play, this Italian Cream Cake is sure to become a favorite. Each cake layer is full of fresh, citrusy orange zest, flaked coconut, and crisp pecan pieces and then enrobed in a pecan-packed Cream Cheese Frosting for a tangy twist and added nutty crunch. Simultaneously decadent and delicate, it's sure to be a hit at every celebration of the season.

- **⅔ cup (120 grams) all-vegetable shortening**
- **⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **1⅓ cups (267 grams) granulated sugar**
- **2 teaspoons (4 grams) packed orange zest**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **4 large eggs (200 grams), separated and room temperature**
- **1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking soda**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **⅔ cup (160 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature**
- **1½ cups (130 grams) loosely packed sweetened flaked coconut**
- **1¼ cups (160 grams) finely chopped pecans*, toasted**
- **Cream Cheese Frosting (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Spray 2 (8-inch) round cake pans with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper; spray parchment.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat shortening, butter, granulated sugar, orange zest, and vanilla at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. In a medium bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, and salt. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture to shortening mixture in three additions alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Pour into a large bowl.
4. Clean bowl of stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at high speed until stiff peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. Gently fold into batter in two additions. Add coconut and ½ cup (60 grams) pecans, and gently fold until combined. Divide batter between prepared pans (about 580 grams each).
5. Bake until tops are golden and pulling away from pan edges and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Level cooled cakes, if desired.
6. Reserve ¾ cup (184 grams) Cream Cheese Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a ⁶⁄₁₆-inch French star piping tip (Ateco #864). Spread 2 cups (490 grams) remaining frosting between cake layers. Spread ¾ cup (184 grams) remaining frosting on top and sides of cake to make a very thin crumb coat. Refrigerate cake for 15 minutes.
7. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat remaining Cream Cheese Frosting and remaining ¾ cup (100 grams) pecans at low speed until combined. Spread on top and sides of cake, smoothing as desired. Decorate top of cake as desired with reserved ¾ cup (184 grams) frosting in pastry bag.

**We used Schermer Pecans.*

Cream Cheese Frosting

Makes about 7 cups

- **2 (8-ounce) packages (454 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **1 (2-pound) bag (907 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese, butter, and salt with a mixer at medium speed until creamy. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add vanilla, beating until combined.

PEPPERMINT HOT CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

If you're looking for a seasonal showstopper, look no further! With a crushed cocoa cookie crust and a luscious filling full of chocolate-peppermint flavor, it's only fitting that the whole thing be topped with a tower of toasted jumbo marshmallows. When it comes time to cut, each slice gets its own marshmallow for the full peppermint hot chocolate experience.

Crust:

- **25 cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies* (286 grams)**
- **½ cup (107 grams) peppermint candies, finely crushed**
- **3½ tablespoons (49 grams) unsalted butter, melted**

Filling:

- **1 cup (150 grams) chopped 60% cacao semisweet chocolate**
- **¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar**
- **3 tablespoons (15 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **3 (8-ounce) packages (680 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) peppermint extract**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature**

Garnish: jumbo marshmallows, crushed peppermint candies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray an 8-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour.
2. For crust: In the work bowl of a food processor, place cookies with filling and candies; pulse until finely ground. Add melted butter; pulse until combined. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of prepared pan. Freeze 10 minutes.
3. Top with a piece of parchment paper, letting ends extend over edges of plate. Add pie weights, filling about half way up sides of pan. Bake until set and fragrant, 10 to 12 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and pie weights. (If sides dipped any during the baking process, use the sides of a measuring cup to gently press back into place while crust is still warm). Let cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Wrap bottom and sides of pan in a layer of heavy-duty foil; place in a large oven bag, tucking ends so bag is flush with top edge of pan. (If you do not use an oven bag, wrap in a double layer of foil.) Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C), and position oven rack in bottom third of oven.
4. For filling: In the top of a double boiler, place chocolate. Cook over simmering water, stirring frequently, until melted. Remove from heat, and let cool slightly (95°F/35°C to 100°F/37°C), about 10 minutes.
5. In a medium bowl, whisk together sugar and cocoa.
6. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add sugar mixture and extracts; beat at medium-low speed until sugar is melted and mixture is smooth. With mixer on low speed, add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in cooled chocolate until smooth, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Pour filling into prepared crust. Transfer springform pan to a large roasting pan; place in oven. Pour enough water into roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of springform pan.
7. Bake until edges are set but center is slightly jiggly, about 1 hour. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 1½ to 2 hours. Refrigerate in pan on a wire rack overnight, loosely covering with foil only when completely cool to prevent condensation from forming on top of cheesecake.
8. Carefully remove cooled cheesecake from pan, and transfer to a serving plate. Top with marshmallows, if desired. Using a handheld kitchen torch, brown marshmallows, watching carefully. Top with candies, if desired.

**We used Oreos.*

cover recipe

RASPBERRY-APRICOT LINZER COOKIES

Makes about 20 sandwich cookies

Filled with a combination of raspberry jam and apricot preserves, these Linzer cookies are as intricate and beautiful as a fresh-fallen snowflake but with a bright, fruity bite. The lemon-scented cookie dough lends a citrusy kick that plays beautifully with the fruit-forward cookies. A dusting of confectioners' sugar is the wintry accent that brings it all together.

- 3¼ cups (406 grams) all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar*
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (198 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams)
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) lemon extract
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) packed lemon zest
- 3 tablespoons (60 grams) seedless raspberry jam
- 3 tablespoons (60 grams) apricot preserves
- ¼ cup (30 grams) confectioners' sugar

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together flour, granulated sugar, and salt by hand. Using the paddle attachment, with mixer on low speed, add cold butter, beating until mixture is crumbly, about 2 minutes. Beat in egg, egg yolk, lemon extract, and lemon zest. Increase mixer speed to medium-low, and beat until a dough starts to form. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

3. On a heavily floured surface, roll dough to 3/16-inch thickness. Using a 2½-inch snowflake-shaped cutter, cut dough, and place 1 inch apart on prepared pans. Using a 1½-inch snowflake-shaped cutter, cut centers from half of cookies. Reroll and cut scraps once. Place 1 inch apart on prepared pans.

4. Bake until bottom edges are lightly golden brown, 8 to 9 minutes. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let completely on wire racks.

5. In a small bowl, combine jam and preserves. Spread about ½ teaspoon (3 grams) filling onto flat side of all solid cookies. Dust top of cookies with cutouts with confectioners' sugar. Place cookies with cutouts, flat side down, on top of filling.

**We used C&H® Granulated Sugar.*

GINGERBREAD STREUSEL MINI LOAVES

Makes 4 (5½x3-inch) loaves

Perfect for sharing and full of warm winter spices, these mini loaves are the ultimate holiday treat. Delightfully tender and rich, the four loaves are topped with a lightly spiced pecan streusel before baking to gorgeous golden perfection. Plus, they'll fill your home with irresistible aromas that are sure to have everyone flocking to the kitchen.

Streusel:

- ½ cup (63 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1½ tablespoons (18 grams) granulated sugar
- 1½ tablespoons (21 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 tablespoons (42 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (56 grams) chopped pecans

Batter:

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ⅔ cup (147 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- ¼ cup (85 grams) unsulphured molasses
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- 1¾ cups (219 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking soda
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground allspice
- ½ cup (120 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature

1. For streusel: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves. Using a pastry blender or fork, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly and butter is incorporated; stir in pecans. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray 4 (5½x3-inch) loaf pans with baking spray with flour. Line pans with parchment paper.

3. For batter: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and brown sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in molasses and vanilla.

4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, baking soda, cloves, and allspice. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition. Divide batter among prepared pans (about 1 cup or 200 grams each). Top each loaf with 3 tablespoons (35 grams) streusel, keeping larger pieces of streusel near edges and sandier streusel in center. (See Notes.)

5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 35 minutes, loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary. (See Notes.) Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in airtight containers for up to 3 days.

Notes: *Heavier streusel pieces will weigh down the top of the loaf and prevent it from rising and letting steam escape.*

The brown sugar, molasses, and spices turn this bread batter a brown color before baking, so it's important to watch the loaves closely and cover with foil as needed so they do not burn.

RED VELVET SCONES

Makes 8 scones

Vibrantly hued and subtly laced with notes of cocoa, these Red Velvet Scones take the flavors of the beloved cake and turn them into a breakfast bake ideal for holiday mornings. Finished with a drizzle of cream cheese glaze and sprinkled with sparkling sugar, these scones are the ultimate accompaniment to a warm cup of coffee or cocoa.

Scones:

- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons (10 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- 4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ½ cup (113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (210 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) red liquid food coloring
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract*

Glaze:

- 3 ounces (86 grams) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream

Garnish: sparkling sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. For scones: In a large bowl, whisk together flour, granulated sugar, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. Using a pastry blender or 2 forks, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly and butter is smaller than the size of peas.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together cream, food coloring, and vanilla. Make a well in center of flour mixture; add cream mixture, stirring until almost combined. Knead lightly with hands just until dough is smooth and fully hydrated.
4. Shape dough into a ball. Place dough on prepared pan; press into a 7-inch circle (about 1 inch thick). Cut dough into 8 wedges. Place about 1½ inches apart.
5. Bake until an instant-read thermometer registers 205°F (96°C), 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool on pan on a wire rack.
6. For glaze: In a medium bowl, whisk together cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, and cream until combined. Drizzle onto cooled scones, and garnish with sparkling sugar, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

**We used Rodelle Vanilla Extract.*

LA CUISINE PARIS: A French Souvenir

AN INTIMATE LOOK AT THE PREMIER COOKING SCHOOL OF PARIS, FRANCE, AND HOME TO *BAKE FROM SCRATCH* BAKING RETREATS

BY KYLE GRACE MILLS / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

On the right bank of the Seine, just a stone's throw from the impressive Hôtel de Ville and within view of the grand and gothic Cathedral Notre Dame, lies a narrow building marked with a simple sign that reads "La Cuisine Paris." Tucked beside a traditional bistro, Le Trumilou, La Cuisine Paris seems the humblest entry on this stretch of Parisian sidewalk. But upon entering, visitors immediately encounter a cook's and baker's sanctuary, a Francophile's dream culinary school made delightfully real. Upstairs, light streams through expansive windows, casting sunshine on a state-of-the-art kitchen lined with stand mixers, ovens, and stovetops. Downstairs, a centuries-old cellar has been transformed into two more modern kitchens, with new cooking equipment sharing space with ancient stone archways and ceilings. Finally, at the street level is a compact gift shop and welcome desk, where a warm chorus of *bonjour* greets all who enter La Cuisine's doors. It's the premier English-language cooking school in Paris, France, and where *Bake from Scratch* hosts its Parisian baking retreats.

This charming culinary school is the vision of Jane Bertch. Once upon a time, Jane was an international banker, splitting time between London, England, and Chicago, Illinois, and various European cities of commerce. At a personal crossroads, Jane began to wonder what else lay on the horizon. "I had a New Year's Eve dinner party with friends, and we started, as you do after several glasses of wine, talking about what you might be when you grow up or what you could have been. It just kind of fell out of my mouth that I would open a cooking school in Paris," Jane says. What seemed like a throwaway comment became a full-flung obsession. "I like to think of it as this little snowflake that fell from the sky. And then I started playing with it, and it was like a snowball and then it turned into something much bigger," she says. At the heart of this idea was a longing for personal connection. "I thought that was a really unique way to be with people," Jane says. This desire lay at the core of La Cuisine, a signature of Jane's warm approach to business. As for using food as the main

channel for this venture, this, too, felt a natural fit. "In my family, all the important meetings and discussions took place around my grandmother's kitchen table," Jane says.

Despite her confidence and business acumen, Jane faced a number of challenges as an American starting a business in Paris. Of utmost importance was La Cuisine's location. After a brief time in a courtyard near San Michel, Jane searched for a more permanent, indoor location for her culinary school. Serendipitously, a fixer-upper popped up on the market. "At the time, it was essentially a nightclub," Jane says, "but it was probably a shop hundreds of years ago, with the upstairs being the shopkeeper's apartment." The building had good bones but required an extensive renovation that pushed Jane to her breaking point. "Just thinking about that time makes me feel like I'm going to have a heart attack. I could have gone bald from all the stress," she says. Still, at the conclusion of the revamp, Jane had a beautiful cooking school located on the Seine in Le Marais district, a neighborhood packed with medieval architectural gems and plenty of Old-World charm. This romantic ambience is sent into overdrive during the holiday season, when the sparkling nearby Christmas markets bring an extra twinkle to the City of Light. With the ideal setting secured, Jane now worked on crafting the perfect culinary experience for traveling foodies.

Jane's winsome influence is felt throughout the La Cuisine experience, from the carefully curated gift shop to the thoughtfully planned pâtisserie classes. Each class uses equipment and ingredients that visitors can find in their own home kitchen. The decision behind this approachable environment was centered around comfort and accessibility. "Why learn in an environment that you don't feel comfortable in? Why leave feeling frustrated or worse—incapable of doing something? We want people to be able to do it in their home kitchens," Jane says. And although Jane is a woman of taste and talent, she credits

Paris

the unique success of La Cuisine to her ability to listen to her clients. "Relationships only exist if you listen to what other people are saying. So, I learned very early on in my relationship with La Cuisine clients to listen to what I believed they were saying," Jane says.

Therein lies the key to the unique success of La Cuisine: the classes are curated to the students' desires. English-speaking French instructors guide students through the baking and cooking process with grace, empathy, and dash of good humor. "I never wanted somebody in stark whites who's barking orders at the people around them. Let's create an environment where people feel like they're a part of it, not just watching it," she says. The second important feature of La Cuisine's winning formula is the intimate classes shared with fellow attendees. Attired in either hot pink or chocolate-brown aprons, the La Cuisine official colors, attendees are split into pairs, tag-teaming the process of making macarons, tarte Tatin, and croissants. With food working as the great equalizers, strangers part as friends and lifelong connections are forged. "It's food; it's meant to be shared. I think the greatest way you can communicate across cultures is by sharing food," Jane says. Her final secret to success? A playful energy that infuses every class and tour, no matter the circumstances. "I think we all deserve to play. Even adults. In the pastry classes, people go back to their childhood. They're having fun, it's tactile, and even if it doesn't come out perfectly, they're still proud of it," Jane says. The comraderie and joyful energy was on full display during the 2021 *Bake from Scratch* Holiday Baking Retreat at La Cuisine Paris (captured in the photos here).

For the first-time visitor to La Cuisine, Jane recommends two main experiences: the croissant class and a food tour of a local market. The customized market tours feel like an invitation into a rarely glimpsed sliver of Parisian life. "If you pay attention, you'll see these little ecosystems of neighborhoods, because the people who have been servicing that market and the ones who have been shopping there live there. It's almost like their weekly catch-up," Jane says. Visitors also get the chance to view the French people's reverence and respect for seasonal produce. Jane has a special fondness for the croissant class as well but for completely separate reasons. "For me, personally, it's a wonderful testament to if you believe in something, don't give up on it. When we first started to do croissant classes, I had to cancel them left and right because nobody would sign up for them. It drove me nuts. But I just stuck with it and then it picked up," Jane says. "Picked up" is an understatement, as the croissant class is now the most popular class on the docket. "We could literally be doing croissant classes all day long and replace every other thing on our calendar, and they would be filled with waiting lists," Jane says proudly.

At the conclusion of a class, Jane hopes that those who visit La Cuisine don't leave with just a recipe or a box of macarons. Its precious memories she prizes above all else. "In North America, a souvenir is a physical item that we take. The word *souvenir* in French means "memory." And I love that because that's kind of what we do in a cross-cultural way; people take their memories with them when they visit La Cuisine," says Jane. With this sweet payoff in mind, it's easy to see why *Bake from Scratch* has chosen La Cuisine as its official base for French baking retreats.

As for those intrepid individuals embarking on life's second act, Jane has some parting words of wisdom. "I think there are a lot of people in that space who put so much anxiety on themselves because they don't know what their passion is. Well, I'll tell you what: I'm still trying to find mine. Maybe that's my journey in life—to explore and find my passion," she says. A good place to begin this grand exploration? Try La Cuisine Paris, a cooking school that celebrates the glorious intersection of people and passion.

GO THERE

To book a class at La Cuisine Paris, visit *lacuisineparis.com*. And be sure to sign up for Jane's delightful monthly email, Le Chou Chou, so you can stay up-to-date with all the culinary happenings in Paris.

MINI BÛCHES DE NOËL

Makes 4 mini roulades

At the Bake from Scratch *Holiday Baking Retreat hosted at La Cuisine, Mini Bûches de Noël offer home bakers a way to express their sweet creativity, allowing a number of different decorations, fillings, and glazes to be used across four petite roulades.*

Ganache:
- 1⅓ cups plus 2 tablespoons (350 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 1¼ cups (210 grams) chopped 75% cacao dark chocolate

Chocolate Génoise:
- ¼ cup (20 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2½ tablespoons (20 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2½ tablespoons (20 grams) cornstarch
- 4 large eggs (200 grams)
- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar

Filling:
- ¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon (200 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons (50 grams) crème de marrons or chestnut cream
- 2 tablespoons (25 grams) mascarpone cheese
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) dark rum or cherry cordial (optional)

Glaze:
- 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons (200 grams) chopped milk chocolate
- ¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons (50 grams) chopped 75% cacao dark chocolate
- 3 tablespoons (40 grams) canola oil
- ¼ cup (60 grams) candied almonds, chopped

Meringue Mushrooms (recipe follows)
Candied cherries
Candied chestnuts
Garnish: confectioners' sugar

1. For ganache: In a small saucepan, bring cream to a boil over medium-low heat.
2. In a medium heatproof bowl, place chocolate. Pour hot cream over chocolate, and stir until smooth. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line an 18x13-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
4. For chocolate génoise: In a medium bowl, sift together cocoa, flour, and cornstarch until combined.
5. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat eggs and granulated sugar at medium speed for 3 minutes. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until you obtain a frothy texture and a nice ribbon texture. Gently fold in cocoa mixture until combined. Spread batter in prepared pan.
6. Bake until cake springs back when lightly pressed in center, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool completely in pan.
7. For filling: Clean bowl of stand mixer and whisk attachment. Using the whisk attachment, beat cream, chestnut cream, mascarpone, and rum or cherry cordial (if using) at medium speed for 1 minute; increase mixer speed to high, and beat until fluffy.
8. Transfer génoise onto a clean sheet of parchment paper. Spread filling onto cake.
(Add some crushed Meringue Mushrooms, candied cherries, or candied chestnuts, if desired.) Starting with one long side, roll up cake as tightly as possible. Slice into 4 equal segments.
9. Clean bowl of stand mixer and whisk attachment. Using the whisk attachment, beat ganache at medium speed until it begins to stiffen. (Do not overbeat.) Immediately spread over cake slices to coat. (Pipe in a swirling decoration, if desired.)
10. For glaze: In the top of a double boiler, combine chocolates. Cook over simmer water, stirring occasionally, until melted. Remove from heat, and stir in oil and almonds. Pour glaze onto cakes. Top with Meringue Mushrooms, candied cherries, and candied chestnuts. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired.

Meringue Mushrooms

Makes 40 to 60 mushrooms

- 6 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons (100 grams) egg whites (3 to 4 large egg whites), room temperature
- ¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon (100 grams) confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting

1. Preheat oven to 195°F (90°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium speed until foamy; gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until combined. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until mixture is firm.
3. Transfer meringue to a pastry bag fitted with a ¼-inch round piping tip. Pipe meringue into small balls and longer shapes to create mushroom tops and stems. Immediately dust with confectioners' sugar.
4. Bake until meringues are firm and dry to the touch, about 2 hours.

beautiful BÛCHES of Paris

BY LINDSEY TRAMUTA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

NOTHING SAYS THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN FRANCE QUITE LIKE THE BÛCHE DE NOËL, A YULE LOG CAKE AS COMMON TO FESTIVE TABLES AS OYSTERS AND PERFECTLY CHILLED CHAMPAGNE. FOR PASTRY CHEFS AND BAKERS, IT'S ALSO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND OPPORTUNE MOMENTS OF THE YEAR TO FLEX THEIR CREATIVITY, WITH INVENTIVE FLAVOR PAIRINGS, RIFFS ON THE CLASSIC YULE LOG SHAPE, AND ORNATE DECORATIVE TOUCHES. THESE ARE A FEW OF THE EXQUISITE *BÛCHES* WE SPOTTED LAST YEAR IN THE FAMED CITY OF LIGHT.

LA GLACERIE

13 rue du Temple
75004 Paris
laglacerie.fr

For several years, Meilleur Ouvrier de France pastry chef David Wesmaël has been bringing his award-winning ice cream-making expertise to the holiday table with his *bûches glacées*. With a textured and colorful theme (animal print, marble, and more), his "nomadic" collection of cakes is all the more special because the cakes fit perfectly into cold-sealing tubes that can be shipped throughout France. The flavors themselves were inspired by far-flung adventures, such as the Madagasikara, which blends mango and Madagascan vanilla ice creams with a lime and banana center, or the Strombolia, which nods to Sicily with its pistachio ice cream center married with an almond iced mousse, strawberry and lemon sorbet for freshness, and a lemony-almond crust for texture and crunch.

LA MAISON DU CHOCOLAT

Multiple locations
lamaisonduchocolat.com/en_fr/stores

Every year, Meilleur Ouvrier de France and head chocolatier of La Maison du Chocolat Nicolas Cloiseau sets a high creative bar for the Maison's holiday spread. He and his team begin with a labor-intensive artistic statement piece, designed as a giant ornament and produced in very limited quantities (10 to be exact), from which the bûche and a series of chocolate stocking stuffers emerge. Cut into the crunchy almond bûche and you'll find a dark, single-origin chocolate mousse (96% from São Tomé), almond praliné, and bed of fresh and puréed violet figs. Affixed to the bûche itself are eight chocolate ornaments, each a different size and decorated with a total of 572 precise perforations—almost too beautiful to slice.

PIERRE HERMÉ

Multiple boutiques
pierreherme.com/les-buches-de-noel-2021

Elegance on the holiday table is a clear objective of nearly every Pierre Hermé bûche, year after year. The top chef's signature flavors, such as the Ispahan (rose water, lychee, and raspberry) and Infiniment Noisette (hazelnut) are annual favorites woven into new shapes each year, but there are plenty of new concoctions, too. Take the Kokoro: its smooth shape and illustrated embellishment on the outer coating may look simple but belies its exotic composition. The citrus-soaked baba crust and coconut shortbread layer add a spongy, crunchy touch to balance the smoothness of a passion fruit gelée and flavors of caramelized and spiced pineapple. Lime zest brings a brightness to the vanilla cream layered throughout. The overall mélange of fruity and citrus flavors tastes like a stroll through a sun-drenched garden—the perfect antidote to the beginning of winter.

NINA MÉTAYER, DÉLICATISSERIE

Online and at Printemps du Goût
59 rue de Caumartin
75009 Paris
delicatisserie.com/en/christmas-logs-2021-by-nina-metayer

After working her way through a number of luxury hotel pastry kitchens, it's been through her solo work that Nina Métayer has shined most. She's earned ample attention since launching her online pastry shop, Délicatesserie, most of all during Christmas for her elegant update to a traditional log cake, meant to play on texture and flavors. Walk in the Forest, as she calls it, is also vegan, using almond and soy milks and vegan chocolate by Linnolat. A crunchy chocolate shortbread is layered with an airy hazelnut and almond mousse, light and smooth chamomile cream, and crushed cocoa beans with dried kaffir lime leaves. Fine dark chocolate leaves delicately affixed to the mousse add a refined and crunchy decorative touch.

BEYOND THE BÛCHE

Seasonal pastry is equally as important to the end-of-year festivities at the city's best hotels and bakeries as they transform their spaces into refined winter wonderlands. To get into the spirit, here's where to head for festive teatime or to pick up provisions for your own *goûter* at home.

BONTEMPS PÂTISSERIE–JARDIN SECRET TEA SALON

57 rue de Bretagne
75003 Paris

Known for its retro-chic décor and focus on the French *sablé*, this sweet destination in the Marais has expanded in recent years, adding a cozy tea salon where guests can linger over pastry chef-owner Fiona Leluc's shortbread treats. Order a selection of mini cookies with seasonal fillings (blood orange, passion fruit, chestnut, and more), a generous piece of lemon or orange tart, or mini chocolate fondant and pecan bars with a pot of tea, all served on vintage porcelain dishware.

LE PRINCE DE GALLES

33 avenue George V
75008 Paris

Tristan Rousselot, who got his start teaching and cooking at the Escoffier cooking school at the Ritz Paris, is one of the most promising young stars in the Parisian pastry scene. At the Prince de Galles, you'll find miniatures of the chef's take on classic pastries, from the flan to Paris-Brest, updated with just enough boldness to win over pastry lovers hungry for originality.

LIMBAR, CHEVAL BLANC HOTEL

8 quai du Louvre
75001 Paris
limbar.fr

Doubling as a tea salon by day and a bar by night, the woody Limbar lounge on the ground floor of the Cheval Blanc hotel offers an intimate backdrop to sample Maxime Frédéric's refined pastries. The visionary chef, known for his previous work at the Four Seasons George V, celebrates France's regional sweets—from his signature vanilla Annécien cake (from, you guessed it, Annecy) and the Parisian flan to the gâteau Basque and cannelé from Bordeaux.

HÔTEL DE CRILLON

10 place de la Concorde
rosewoodhotels.com/en/hotel-de-crillon/dining/jardin-d-hiver

Matthieu Carlin, the head pastry chef at the grand Hôtel de Crillon, kept dessert lovers of all ages in mind with his holiday bûche in the shape of a sleigh one can easily imagine gliding along through a winter wonderland. Beneath the base in dark chocolate sits a hazelnut dacquoise with lightly roasted Piedmont hazelnuts for added crunch. A *fromage blanc* mousse softens the taste, while the lemon crémeux and marmalade add a fresh, slightly sour flavor. A dulce de leche filling in the center is the indulgent touch fit for celebration.

RITZ PARIS

15 place Vendôme
75001 Paris
ritzparis.com/en-GB

After a heavy holiday meal, you might think a light and fruity sliver of bûche would be the most suitable finish. But for Ritz Paris head pastry chef and avowed chocolate lover François Perret, it's the perfect moment for indulgence. Inspired by Swiss Christmases in honor of César Ritz's upbringing in Switzerland, the chef's Christmas tree-shaped cake is as richly chocolaty as one might imagine for a Swiss alpine holiday. The tree features a crunchy, chocolate flourless crust and is filled with an airy mousse made of intense, grand cru chocolate (72%—cacao beans that chef Perret hand-selects in Panama) along with a praliné of toasted and caramelized almonds. A golden *guirland* runs across each layer of the tree's coating. Topping it off is a golden chocolate star that gives the *sapin de Noël* its ritzy touch.

MAISON ALEPH

4th and 18th arrondissements
20 rue de la Verrerie
75004 Paris
+33 9 83 03 42 02
63 rue des Abbesses
75018 Paris
+33 9 87 31 09 10
maisonaleph.com

Levantine pastries take center stage at Myriam Sabet's beloved pastry shop Maison Aleph. Known for mixing French technique with textures and flavors from the Levant, such as kadaïf angel hair nests made with clarified butter and filled with flavored creams or candied fruit, Myriam extended her approach to traditionally shaped bûches in a suite of combinations. Perhaps the most original of all four is the Grenade Marron bûche, where pomegranate, the emblematic fruit of the Mediterranean, gets paired with chestnut, a fixture of the French winter palate. The rolled sponge cake base is made of chestnut flour and filled with a silky chestnut mousse, chestnut cream inserts, confit pomegranate and seeds, all on a crispy candied chestnut crust. The pure pistachio, lemon almond, and hazelnut halva bûches all have a similar structure, built on a light sponge cake and incorporating the best ingredients available.

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origin of a classic

Madeleines

LEARN THE MYSTERIOUS TALE BEHIND THE MADELEINE, THE CELEBRATED FRENCH SHELL-SHAPED PASTRY

BY JAMIE SCHLER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

Marcel Proust famously immortalized the madeleine in his tome *Remembrance of Things Past*, forever infusing this sweet, curiously shell-shaped cake with the romance of turn-of-the-last-century France. Although I've lived in France for 35 years, I've never read Proust, so when I went looking through his works for mentions of the madeleine, I was surprised to find that his character hadn't enjoyed this treat in some gilded Parisian *salon de thé*. Rather, the lad indulges in the "exquisite pleasure" of dipping "the little scallop-shell" of pastry into a cup of tea with his mother at home.

I discovered madeleines in a similar way in my mother-in-law's modest kitchen (oddly enough, her name was Madeleine) when I first married into a French family. They were purchased in large bags at the supermarket or from the local baker—dense, deeply yellow, sweet but not too sweet, fat little things that were like individual pound cakes that nestled in the palm of one's hand. We ate them at breakfast or at snack time, always dipped into hot coffee or cold milk, the liquid softening the tender but firm crumb and infusing the cake with a delicate coffee flavor or the coolness of the milk. Most traditional French recipes have a well-defined beginning, either in modest homes for family consumption or in the luxe kitchens of the royals and nobles. And so, I went looking for the birthplace of Proust's "squat, plump little cakes," curious as to what I would find.

One thing is well agreed upon: all roads lead to the town of Commercy in the Lorraine region of France. The most likely legend brings us into the kitchens of Stanisław Leszczyński, former King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, and, most importantly to our story, Duke of Lorraine. On a visit to his château in 1755, Stanisław prepared to host a *grande fête*. Unfortunately, his pastry chef abruptly and furiously quit, taking all the pastries he had prepared with him. A servant named Madeleine saved the day by preparing a platter of small cakes from a recipe given to her by her grandmother. The banquet guests were delighted, as was Stanisław, who immediately baptized the cake *madeleine* in honor of the *pâtissière*. He then introduced his daughter, Marie Leszczyńska, wife of Louis XV, to the madeleine, and she, equally enchanted, popularized them at the royal court. But who was this Madeleine?

According to the official version put forward by the *Confrérie Gastronomique des Compagnons de la Madeleine de Commercy*, the official brotherhood of the "Authentic Madeleine of Commercy," Madeleine Paulmier was a young servant in the château called into the kitchen upon the departure of the pastry chef. Another popular but equally unsubstantiated version, most notably put forth by the writer Alexandre Dumas in his *Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine*, also confers the honor on one Madeleine Paulmier, but this Madeleine was a Cordon Bleu chef in the service of a wealthy bourgeois family in the town of Commercy. Already noted for her cooking, upon hearing of the catastrophe at the château, she proposed

her recipe—possibly also learned from her grandmother—and, not having any molds in which to bake these small, individual cakes, baked them in shell-shaped pans used for cooking Saint Jacques scallops.

There is yet another Madeleine whom we can possibly credit for this classic dessert's invention. In the 1600s, Madeleine Simonin was the cook of Jean-François Paul de Gondi, cardinal de Retz, who had been exiled to his property in Commercy. According to lore, Simonin was already making small, oval cakes using a doughnut-like batter, flavored with lemon zest and *la liqueur d'Hendaye*, an alcohol made from fennel and sugar syrup, as early as 1661.

Although the beginnings of the madeleine are disputed, the success of the madeleine is well recorded. After the death of old King Stanisław in 1766, one of his pastry chefs set up a bakery in Commercy where he prepared and sold madeleines. Years later, in 1806, the first recipe for madeleines appeared in chef André Viard's cookbook *Le Cuisinier Impérial*, made simply with flour, sugar, butter, and eggs and flavored with either orange blossom water or lemon zest. Used in varying amounts and combined through different methods, these ingredients remained a staple in recipes throughout history, with batters varying from a dense pound cake known as *quatre-quarts* to a light and airy génoise sponge. And while it does seem to be agreed upon that the original *madeleine de Commercy* was flavored with lemon zest or orange blossom water, there is absolutely no rule whatsoever governing the flavorings of the modern madeleine. In the 1990s, young chefs rediscovered the madeleine and ran with it, recreating it in every flavor imaginable, turning something rustic and homey into something chic and trendy.

Still, what has fundamentally defined the madeleine is its curiously distinctive shell shape and its familiar hump. It's possible that the shape can be credited to inventive necessity, with early bakers making them in shells normally used for scallops because of a lack of individual molds. But the shell shape is most likely linked to the pilgrimage trail of Saint Jacques de Compostelle, the Way of Saint James. The scallop shell, the emblem of Saint James, symbolized a spiritual compass, its lines representing the different routes traveled leading to the tomb of Saint James. It's thought that vendors along the route were selling shell-shaped cakes to pilgrims as early as the 11th or 12th century. And as Commercy was fairly close to the town of Châlons-en-Champagne, a stopover along the route, it's very likely that the Madeleine of one of the legends of the cakes, or her grandmother, was familiar with the tradition.

Centuries later, the madeleine has become a classic French treat for breakfast, snack time, and coffee breaks. At once homey and elegant, madeleines are simple to make and can be flavored as simply or as creatively as you like, making them the perfect treat for any occasion.

TRADITIONAL MADELEINES

Makes 8 to 10 madeleines

Recipe by Jamie Schler

Orange blossom water was a traditional flavoring for the madeleine when it was first created and then became popular. This is my recipe for the more classic, traditional madeleine.

Unsalted butter, softened
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
5 tablespoons (60 grams) granulated sugar
½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) orange blossom water
¼ teaspoon (1 gram) vanilla extract
½ cup (62 grams) all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon (1.25 grams) baking powder
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ cup (60 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature (see Note)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Using a soft pastry brush, brush softened butter into 10 to 12 madeleine pan wells to coat. Lightly dust with flour, and tap out excess.
2. In a medium bowl, beat egg and sugar with a mixer at medium speed until thick and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add orange blossom water and vanilla, and beat for 1 minute.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt; using a wooden spoon, stir flour mixture into egg mixture until smooth and well combined. Add room temperature butter, and beat at medium speed until smooth, creamy, and well combined, about 1 minute.
4. Spoon 1 heaping tablespoon (about 20 grams) batter into each prepared well. (These do not have to be spread or smoothed out.)
5. Bake until risen with distinctive bump, center is set, and edges are just golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Carefully remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

Note: *As opposed to softened butter, room temperature butter gives no resistance when pressed and is easy to spread.*

fast-fix baking

A SWEET, SNOW-COVERED TREAT

THESE COOKIES WILL IMMEDIATELY TRANSPORT YOU TO A WINTER WONDERLAND, COMPLETE WITH WARM WINTRY SPICES, ROASTED CHESTNUTS, AND A DUSTING OF CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR

SPICED CHESTNUT SNOWBALL COOKIES

Makes 24 cookies

These buttery, crumbly snowball cookies are flecked with finely chopped roasted chestnuts and flavored with a mulling spice-inspired blend of spices for cozy warmth in every bite. Blanketed in their signature snowy confectioners' sugar coating, these snowball cookies are a simple classic reimagined.

- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup (100 grams) very finely chopped roasted chestnuts
- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar*
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) tightly packed orange zest
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ teaspoon (1 gram) vanilla extract
- ¾ cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour and chestnuts until chestnuts are finely ground. Add granulated sugar, orange zest, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, salt, cloves, and pepper. Pulse until well combined, stopping to scrape sides and bottom of bowl with a rubber spatula. Add butter and vanilla, and pulse until dough comes together. (Dough will be soft.)
3. Shape dough into 24 (1-inch) balls (about 16 grams each), and place ¾ to 1 inch apart on prepared pan.
4. Bake until tops are lightly golden and bottoms are golden brown, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Working in batches, toss warm cookies in confectioners' sugar until well coated; place on a wire rack, and let cool completely.
5. Just before serving, toss cooled cookies in confectioners' sugar again until well coated.

**We used C&H® Granulated Sugar.*

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